A CRITIQUE OF A WITTGENSTEINIAN PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

TERENCE JOHN McKNIGHT

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

SPRING, 1977

ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Section 1. Part A.

An examination of Wittgenstein's views on religion in the Tractatus period of his philosophy with particular attention being given to the mystical themes and topics of that philosophy; it being argued that such themes and topics play a central role and have an integral part in that philosophy.

Section 1. Part B.

An examination of Wittgenstein's later theory of meaning and conception of philosophy, culminating in a detailed examination of Wittgenstein's Lectures on Religious Belief.

Section 2

A critical survey of the writings of certain Wittgensteinian philosophers of religion (D. Z. Phillips, P. Winch, R. Holland, N. Malcolm, and R. Rhees) examining how they apply Wittgenstein's later epistemology to religious belief and concepts - noting in particular what they have to say about the 'grammar of the reality of God'. Particular emphasis is placed on the work of Phillips and specific attention is paid to Phillips' use of certain 'mystical' themes and topics from Wittgenstein's Tractatus period of philosophy to give a content to, a characterization of what is involved in participating in the religious life - seeing or viewing the world in a religious manner.

Section 3

A very brief section outlining certain difficulties in the Wittgensteinian approach to problems in the philosophy of religion and suggesting an alternative strategy which could be developed from the 'later' philosophy of Wittgenstein and applied to these same problems.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

In this essay I adopt the following convention for citations:-

Double quotation marks represent a direct verbatim quote with reference given.

Single quotation marks are used to refer to an already quoted passage. I also use single quotation marks for imaginary dialogue.

INTRODUCTION

I think the following points should be noted, because they are important in accounting for the particular direction, the particular format of my essay.

I began my research work with a passionate interest in the work of D. Z. Phillips (1) in the field of philosophy of religion. To be honest, I cannot say that I had an admiring interest, but rather his thoughts intrigued me, baffled me, upset, if you like, my intellectual balance. I suppose I thought I had all the answers. I saw point in the 'falsification challenge' to religion, I could understand and appreciate what philosophers were saying when they doubted whether the concept of God was a coherent notion, and yet, if what D. Z. Phillips was saying was at all true, none of those challenges seemed pertinent. The meaning of religious utterances, the intelligibility of religious concepts, the very 'truth' of religion, all were internal to the 'religious language-game', the 'religious form of life', all of which were part of the 'given' and thus 'unjustifiable'. It seemed as if all my old 'battles', all my old arguments were next to useless. I found this infuriating, frustrating and yet one had to admit, if one wanted to retain some intellectual honesty, that Phillips' challenge had to be faced.

And it was not only Phillips' challenge. N. Malcolm (2), a few years earlier, had surprised the philosophical world not only by producing a 'new version' of Anselm's 'Ontological Argument' but further, and more importantly, by apparently 'enlisting the support' of the notions of 'language-game' and

'form of life' to further his end, i.e. prove the existence of God. Also P. Winch in two publications,(3) in which the suggestions were made that criteria of intelligibility, rationality and reality were internal to, as he called them, 'modes of social life', added fuel to the fire.

Now in attempting to 'come to grips' with these gentlemen,it was obvious that I would have to turn and examine the writings of the philosopher from whom they claimed their intellectual pedigree, i.e. Wittgenstein. It was in the works of the 'later philosophy' of Wittgenstein that notions such as the 'meaning of a word is its use in the language-game', 'to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life', 'forms of life are given', there, basic - like our life - beyond justification (and indeed criticism)', were conceived. (4) But furthermore, I discovered, it was not only to the 'later philosophy' of Wittgenstein that I was referred by such a philosopher as Phillips. He also quoted quite extensively from the 'mystical themes or sections' of the 'early philosophy' of Wittgenstein. (5) This seemed, on the face of it, strange, because wasn't it the case,as Wittgenstein would have us believe, that the 'later philosophy' was a complete rejection of the 'early philosophy', its antithesis if you like? And yet here was Phillips quoting extensively from both 'philosophies'. So I not only turned to examine the 'later philosophy' but also the 'early philosophy'. And what a wealth of detail I found in the 'two philosophies'.

In my examination of the 'early philosophy' I discovered not only (a) the importance of the mystical theme in that philosophy but also (b) the real nature of the 'logical' theory

of meaning Wittgenstein was presenting us with (as opposed to what the Logical Positivist interpretation of the 'early philosophy' would have us believe). I also saw clearly why, for Wittgenstein, religious propositions were inexpressible and also found, especially in the later sections of the Notebooks, (6) some very interesting comments on, among others, the idea of God, ethics, the meaning of life and immortality. So I devote the First Section of my essay to an examination of the 'early and late philosophies' of Wittgenstein and the views on religion he expressed in these periods.

I mentioned that my original interest in examining the 'early philosophy' of Wittgenstein was first aroused because of Phillips' use of some of the 'mystical themes' in that philosophy. Indeed it seems to me that one could label Phillips' 'religious philosophy' as a 'marriage' of the 'later philosophy' of Wittgenstein with the 'mystical themes' of the 'early philosophy'. Let me quickly and very briefly explain what I mean, though I shall say more in the text. It seems to me that what Phillips obtains from the later philosophy is a certain theoretical framework - the notions of 'language-game', 'form of life', the nature and role of philosophy-and this he applies to religion so that, for example, we have 'religious language-games', 'religious forms of life' etc. But the content, the characterization he provides of what is involved in participating in the 'religious form of life', what it means to view the world in a religious fashion, is found, discovered in certain of the 'mystical themes' of the 'early philosophy'. That is, to put it rather loosely, the Tractatus 'mystic' is akin in many respects to Phillips' ideal or paradigm religious

man. So in the Second Section of my essay I examine how the notions of 'language-game', 'form of life' etc. are applied to religious discourse, religious thought by those I have termed, Wittgensteinians.

But who are the Wittgensteinians? Well, I have already mentioned Phillips, Malcolm and Winch and I would also like to include in their number Rush Rhees and R. F. Holland. But it must be emphasised that this 'Wittgensteinian school of religious thought' is in a very undeveloped state. Apart from Phillips who has written extensively, Malcolm has simply written two articles, Winch has published two works which have small portions which bear on the topic, Holland has written two articles which are relevant (7) and there are three chapters in Rhees' latest book which are relevant. (8) Hardly the 'meat of a systematic school' and yet, I think, there is a certain identity of viewpoint, a certain 'family resemblance' between them such that one can feel confident that, while they may not all agree heartily with what the others say, they will not disagree too much either. But it must be admitted that, insofar as Phillips has written the most extensively on the topics I am going to discuss, it will primarily be Phillips I shall be interested in, and attacking.

My Second Section begins by examining Malcolm's revised Ontological Argument article - and here I am mainly interested in the role played by the Wittgensteinian notions of 'language-game' and 'form of life' - and continues to critically examine what, for me, provides the greatest fascination in relation to the Wittgensteinians' philosophy of religion: their 'doctrine' of God, their account 'of the grammar of the reality of God',

of what it means to affirm God as 'real'. I conclude this section by examining some work of Phillips on the nature of religious belief and truth and some comments on philosophy.

In my very brief Third Section, instead of accepting the Wittgensteinian use of Wittgenstein's notions of, for example, 'language-game', 'form of life' etc., and critically examining their, if you like, 'doctrinal theology', as in Section 2, I turn to, at least, present certain difficulties facing the Wittgensteinian approach to problems in the philosophy of religion and very briefly suggest an alternative strategy which could be developed from the later philosophy of Wittgenstein and applied to these particular problems.

I am aware that I may have attempted to tackle too many themes for one essay. I admit this 'fault' from the outset. Yet I do feel there is a certain unity in my essay. However to the beginning and the beginning is of course the Tractatus.

S E C T I O N 1

PART A

"My work has extended from the foundations of logic to the nature of the world." (1)

Russell: "Wittgenstein, are you thinking about logic or about your sins?"
Wittgenstein: "Both!" (2)

Ludwig Wittgenstein concludes the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (3) by referring very briefly and very tersely to the notion of the mystical (das Mystische). The introduction of the notion into the text is connected with some equally brief comments on solipsism, ethics, God, aesthetics, the meaning or purpose of life and eternity-all of which have this at least in common, ~~that~~ they are apparently the object of the 'mystical feeling'. But what does Wittgenstein mean by his use of the expression, the mystical? The following four propositions contain Wittgenstein's references to the mystical in the Tractatus and in the Notebooks. "It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists." (4) "To view the world sub specie aeterni is to view it as a whole - a limited whole. Feeling the world as a limited whole - it is this that is mystical." (5) "There are, indeed, things that cannot be put into words. They make themselves manifest. They are what is mystical." (6) (This remark should also be linked with another proposition in the Tractatus, "What can be shown, cannot be said."

(7)) And finally: "The urge towards the mystical comes of the non-satisfaction of our wishes by science." (8)

From these propositions we can understand that the mystical is concerned not with how the world is but with that it is. Further, to be thus concerned is to view or feel the world 'sub specie aeterni', which is identical with viewing or feeling it as a limited whole and this is what constitutes the mystical. Further, that which is mystical cannot be stated but can only be shown or made manifest. Finally, we learn that the genesis of the mystical urge or feeling is to be found in the inability of science to satisfy our deepest needs.

It certainly seems that for Wittgenstein the mystical is a very important concept. And yet, in the Tractatus, we are told that "the deepest problems are in fact not problems at all." (9) "Even when all possible scientific questions have been answered, the problems of life remain completely untouched. Of course there are then no questions left and this itself is the answer." (10) This is so, because "the totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science," (11) and, further, because

> "what can be said are the propositions of natural science i.e., something that has nothing to do with philosophy - and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions." (12)

Or again,

> "when the answer cannot be put into words, neither can the question be put into words. The middle does not exist. If a question can be framed at all, it is also possible to answer it." (13)

> "The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of the problem. (Is not this the reason why those who have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life became clear to them have then been unable to say what constituted that sense?)" (14)

Now the immediate problem one is faced with here is how does one equate Wittgenstein's talk of the mystical and the connected themes with the above comments? Certainly if one is positivistically inclined, i.e. a logical Positivist, there is no essential problem. Because if, as Wittgenstein claims, the mystical is inexpressible in principle and, further, the problem of the meaning of life is in fact a pseudo-problem, then what this demonstrates is that talk about the sense or purpose of life is 'nonsense talk'. And yet can Wittgenstein really have wanted to draw such a negative conclusion? Doesn't he maintain, as we have seen, that '<u>the sense of life can become clear</u>' even though one may be unable to '<u>say what constituted that sense</u>..'? What it would appear Wittgenstein shares with the Positivists is a willingness to draw a line between, on the one hand, what we can speak about and, on the other hand, what we must be silent about. But, as Engelmann expresses it:

> "The difference is only that they (the Positivists) have nothing to be silent about, Positivism holds - and this is its essence - that what we can speak about is all that matters in life. <u>Whereas Wittgenstein passionately believes that all that really matters in human life is precisely what, in his view we must be silent about</u>." (15)

Indeed in a letter to Ficker, Wittgenstein, in further enunciation of this idea, states:

> "The book's point is an ethical one. I once meant to include in the preface a sentence which is not in fact there now but which I will write out for you here because it will perhaps be a key to the work for you. What I want to write, then, was this: My work consists of two parts: the one presented here plus all that I have not written. And it is precisely this second part that is the important one. My book draws limits to the sphere of the ethical from the inside as it were and I am convinced that this is the only rigorous way of drawing these limits. In short, I believe that where many others today are just gassing, I have managed in my book to put everything firmly into place by being silent about it." (16)

Indeed further on in this same letter Wittgenstein recommends that one should read the preface and the conclusion of the book because they contain its most direct expression. And there the point is forcefully made in the following terms: "The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence." (17)

Within the text of the Tractatus itself the point which Wittgenstein is trying to make is perhaps best expressed when he says:

> "The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen: in it no value exists - and if it did exist it would have no value. If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case.

> For all that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie <u>within</u> the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental. It must lie outside the world." (18)

Or again: "<u>How</u> things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself <u>in</u> the world." (19) "Ethics is transcendental." (20)

Now I mentioned above that Wittgenstein draws a line between, on the one hand, what we can speak about and, on the other hand, what we cannot speak about. But to draw such a line requires that one have in mind a particular theory or account of what it is for words to be used meaningfully, what is involved in language having or being given successful application to the world. And indeed the greater part of the <u>Tractatus</u> is concerned with the nature of language and its relation to the world. The central doctrine propounded on this topic is the famous 'picture theory of meaning'. According to this theory, language consists of propositions which picture the world. Propositions are the perceptible expressions of thoughts, and thoughts are logical pictures of facts. (21)

Thus, to make clear why 'ethics is transcendental' for Wittgenstein, it will be necessary to examine further the 'picture theory of meaning' - the theory of the significant proposition. In doing this I also hope to refute any positivistic suggestion that the 'picture theory of meaning' is an 'empirical theory of meaning', either in fact or in embryo, and the concurrent claim that the references to the mystical in the <u>Tractatus</u> are best thought of as an addendum to the main text of the book - a

regrettable addendum in that it would run counter to any truly positivistic understanding of the world, - but an addendum nevertheless. (22) Now it seems to me that if Wittgenstein's Tractatus is interpreted in this fashion nothing but misunderstanding can result. Wittgenstein's 'picture theory of meaning' is not an 'empiricist theory of meaning' and Wittgenstein's conception of the mystical is not a mere addendum to the main text of the book, but in fact is central to a complete understanding of the text. Thus, in presenting Wittgenstein's claims here, I shall be concerned to argue against the Logical Positivists on these two counts.

Further, my discussion and suggestions so far concerning the mystical may have given the erroneous impression that Wittgenstein only alludes to mystical themes at the end of the book. In fact a 'vision' of the world as a limited whole, and the say/show distinction (which has been aptly labelled as the 'semantic aspect of Wittgenstein's mysticism'), all essential components of Wittgenstein's conception of the mystical, permeate the whole work. Further too, it is not only Ethics 'that cannot be put into words and which is transcendental' but also "logic is transcendental." (23) In fact Wittgenstein's assertion that 'logic is transcendental' follows simply from his theory of logic so that not only logic but also philosophy are inexpressible. Indeed, given that the Tractatus is a philosophical treatise working through the medium of logic it can at least be envisaged how important, crucial and integral a role the concept of the mystical plays in the work. As Wittgenstein states:

> "... my main contention to which the whole business of logical propositions is only

> corollary. The main point is the theory of what can be expressed (gesagt) by propositions - i.e. by language (and, what comes to the same, what can be thought) and what cannot be expressed by propositions but only shown (gezeigt); which, I believe, is the cardinal problem of philosophy ..." (24)

Indeed Engelmann, commenting on the unity of the work, on the interconnection between logic and ethics, says, "... on the one hand the unutterable lies in the relations between language and the world ('the outside world') so, on the other hand does it lie in the relation between language and the world of intuitive values." (25) As an actual account of the interconnection between logic and ethics for Wittgenstein, I believe Engelmann's statement misses the mark, but it will suffice as a first approximation. Rather, it seems to me, the 'Tractarian mystic' views the world as a whole and in so doing 'sees' the general nature of reality with logic providing the key (logic) and, having discovered the 'general nature of reality', places himself in agreement with it (ethical).

However, all this is just to adumbrate what will have to be argued for. To enable me to demonstrate and more importantly establish my point I shall examine not only the Tractatus but also the Notebooks (26) (and especially the sections in the Notebooks referring to God, ethics, eternity etc., themes which although mentioned in the Tractatus are much better understood if examined within the context of the more voluminous treatment of them given in the Notebooks) and Wittgenstein's 'Lecture on Ethics' and 'Notes on talks with Waismann'. (27)

My main aims in this section are, firstly, to give an

account of 'Tractarian mysticism' illustrating its central role and the integral part it plays in the text of the Tractatus, secondly, to refute the Logical Positivists' interpretation of the Tractatus and, thirdly, to specifically illustrate why, for Wittgenstein, there can be no significant ethical or religious propositions (i.e. why ethics and religion are ineffable).

I shall begin, however, with a statement of Wittgenstein's 'picture theory of meaning'.

I think it is obvious that one central concern of Wittgenstein in the Tractatus is with the problem of sense. As we have already seen, Wittgenstein states in the Preface to the Tractatus that the 'whole sense of the book is summed up in the following manner: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what cannot be talked about must be passed over in silence.' Prior to his stating this he also claims that "the book deals with the problems of philosophy," problems which are posed because "the logic of our language is misunderstood." (28) It is because of this that it is important for Wittgenstein to "set a limit to the expression of thoughts," (29) to state explicitly the limits of language - what can be said with sense and what cannot. What conditions, then, must a proposition satisfy to be considered meaningful?

To explicate these conditions let me first begin by examining certain ontological claims made by Wittgenstein at the beginning of the Tractatus. There, Wittgenstein claims, "the world is the totality of facts, not of things." (30) And a fact for Wittgenstein is "the existence of states of affairs."

(31) Now a state of affairs is constituted by objects "standing in a determinate relation to one another." (32) What constitutes objects standing in a determinate relation to one another is their ability, in a state of affirs, to "fit into one another like the links of a chain." (33) And the ability of objects to 'link together' to form states of affairs is a function of their 'form'. (34) By the logical form of an object Wittgenstein means the capacity of an object to combine with other objects in states of affairs. Objects have different logical forms when they have different possibilities of combination or association. Further, for Wittgenstein, objects are the 'simples' of the world and in fact "make up the substance of the world." (35) They are, if you like, the 'stuff' from which states of affairs are constituted. Indeed to deny the existence of simple objects would be to deny substance to the world and hence, most importantly for Wittgenstein, the possibility of making informative meaningful statements about the world. (36)

Now the states of affairs of which Wittgenstein is here speaking are of an atomic or elementary form. That is, they are the simplest kind of facts there are and they cannot be analysed into anything more simple. (37) Now the reason behind the Wittgensteinian claim that there are these atomic or elementary facts or states of affairs (which consist essentially of concatenations of objects) is I think quite simply elucidated. If there were no elementary states of affairs, if all states of affairs were reducible to simpler or more elementary states of affairs, ad infinitum, no proposition would have determinate sense. And "everything that can be put into words can be put

clearly." (38) If language has sense at all, that sense must be determinate and this entails that there must be elementary propositions which are irreducible. (39)

Now let me examine more closely the nature of these elementary propositions - the linguistic side of the equation - in a more detailed fashion. And here we find that language is a mirror image of the world. Wittgenstein's elementary propositions consist solely of names (40) which are simple, like Wittgenstein's objects. (41) And the objects, which constitute the atomic facts, are not only designated by names in the atomic proposition but also the "object is its meaning." (42) Like the states of affairs, the elementary propositions cannot be reduced to anything simpler (43) and thus they assert the existence of elementary states of affairs. (44) Indeed, for Wittgenstein, the very possibility of language itself requires the existence of (a) elementary propositions which cannot be further analysed into yet simpler propositions and, (b) as already stated, elementary propositions which consist entirely of names. By using the term 'name' Wittgenstein means a term which is unanalysable and indefinable. A name can have only one relationship to reality: it either names something or is not a significant symbol at all. To understand a name is to understand its reference. And objects, the referents of names, cannot be described or defined because, if they could, these descriptions or definitions could be further analysable. And if there were no simple objects we would end up, once again, in an infinite regress situation. Therefore names are simples. Also what has been said here, although said in connection with

elementary propositions, applies to all propositions. This is so because all non-elementary propositions are understood via elementary ones, i.e. are analysable into them, are 'truth-functions' of the elementary propositions. (45) Therefore elementary propositions are required which describe states of affairs and these elementary propositions must, as we saw, consist entirely of names which denote simple objects. (46)

Now so far in my exposition I have, on the language side of the equation, talked about names and propositions. But for Wittgenstein there is a very fundamental and technical difference between how names and propositions signify. A name has meaning (Bedeutung) while a proposition has sense (Sinn). And further, it is "only in the context of a proposition that a name has meaning." (47) What Wittgenstein has in mind here is really quite simple. Take the case of a proposition first of all. It is quite obvious that there can be true or false propositions, and one can understand a proposition which is true or false. Indeed a necessary condition for ascribing truth or falsity to a proposition is that one understand what the proposition is asserting. A name, however, for Wittgenstein, cannot have a meaning unless there is an object corresponding to it. Not only can a name only have meaning within "the nexus of a proposition" but further the "object is its meaning." (48)

But while this account makes it clear how names have meaning, what does it mean to claim that a proposition has sense? How do propositions relate to the situations or states of affairs which they describe or represent? First of all, the very possibility of propositions is "based on the principle

that objects have signs as their representatives," (49) and secondly, for Wittgenstein, the sense of a proposition is the situation which it represents or pictures. "A proposition is a picture of reality: for if I understand a proposition, I know the situation that it represents. And I understand the proposition without having had its sense explained to me." (50) But why should Wittgenstein claim that a proposition is a picture of reality? Well, bearing in mind that the very possibility of propositions is based on the signs (names) in the proposition acting as representatives for objects, it belongs to the very essence of a proposition that "it should be able to communicate a new sense to us", because a proposition must "use old expressions to communicate a new sense." (51) We can construct new propositions by using the same words providing we vary the way we combine the words. And in this manner "a proposition communicates a situation to us, and so it must be essentially connected with the situation. And the connexion is precisely that it is its logical picture." (52) To understand a new proposition is to 'read from it' the situation it describes. Now we have reached the heart of Wittgenstein's theory of meaning and it will be necessary, at this stage, to explicate in more detail the nature of Wittgenstein's 'picture theory of meaning'.

Wittgenstein's 'picture theory of meaning' has been taken by some as an empiricist theory of meaning and knowledge.(53) Professor Von Wright places Wittgenstein's concern in its proper context. "It was the question of the nature of the

significant proposition," and he justifies his claim here by quoting from Wittgenstein's Notebooks: "My whole task consists in the explanation of the nature of the proposition." (54) Further, Von Wright relates a conversation in which Wittgenstein stated how the 'picture theory of meaning' first imposed itself on him.

> "He was in a trench on the East Front, reading a magazine in which there was a schematic picture depicting the possible sequence of events in an automobile accident. The picture there served as a proposition; that is, as a description of a possible state of affairs. It had this function owing to a correspondence between the parts of the picture and things in reality. It now occurred to Wittgenstein that one might reverse the analogy and say that a proposition serves as a picture by virtue of a similar correspondence between its parts and the world. The way in which the parts of the proposition are combined - the structure of the proposition - depicts a possible combination of elements in reality, a possible state of affairs." (55)

Before continuing my exposition, I think, in passing, that the following comment is justified. The ideas expressed in this account of the 'origin' of the 'picture theory' must not be assimilated to any 'naive realist epistemology' or any 'correspondence theory of truth' emanating from such an epistemology. First of all, Wittgenstein is more interested in the syntactical features of language than in any general epistemological programme and, secondly, the 'picture theory' is not intended to explain how we discover the truth or falsity of

propositions. Rather its function is to explain how propositions can have meaning. Indeed both true and false propositions picture the same state of affairs. So far from presupposing an empiricist epistemology, Wittgenstein is confident that he has emancipated logic from psychology and epistemology. In fact Wittgenstein holds that "theory of knowledge is the philosophy of psychology" and "psychology is no more closely related to philosophy than any other natural science." (56) Wittgenstein is concerned solely with the sense of a proposition and he completely divorces this concern from any examination of the ways in which we come to know whether a proposition is true. (57)

How then, to continue, does an elementary proposition picture reality? The pictorial aspect of an elementary proposition is the arrangement of names: how names are arranged (combined, related, structured) pictures how objects are possibly arranged. (58) One has to say 'possibly' here because not every proposition pictures an actual arrangement or combination of objects, although every proposition pictures a possible arrangement of objects. Every proposition has a sense but not every proposition is true. Now we have seen how Wittgenstein believed the 'picture theory' to account for our ability to understand new propositions, but, further, Wittgenstein also believes that, if the 'picture theory of meaning' is true, we shall also be able to account for the problem of the false proposition. This problem arises in the following manner. A name, in Wittgenstein's sense of the term, is meaningless if there is no object that it denotes. But a proposition, if it is a false proposition, i.e. if there is no fact corresponding to

it, is not senseless but false. (59) But how can a false proposition retain its sense, if, as we saw, the sense of a proposition is 'the situation it describes'? Well the 'picture theory' answers the problem in this fashion. It is true that what the individual elements of an elementary proposition (the names) signify must exist, but the actual arrangement or combination of the names need not be exemplified in reality for the proposition to have sense. What a false proposition signifies is simply a non-existent combination of existent objects. And it accomplishes this because, given a 'method of projection', the names are arranged as the objects would be arranged or combined if the proposition were true. (60) So in one sense the combination exists, though as a combination of names, not of what the combination of names signifies.

Indeed, for Wittgenstein, a picture is a state of affairs which represents a state of affirs. (60) It is because of this that the picture as a whole can have sense, i.e. that it can represent a "possible situation in logical space." (61) And it can do this because the fact that the elements of a picture "are related to one another in a determinate way represents that things are related to one another in the same way." For Wittgenstein this connexion of the elements can be called the "structure of the picture" and the "possibility of this structure the pictorial form of the picture." (63) The connexion between the structure and form of a proposition and the structure and form of what it represents is crucial, for Wittgenstein, in representing what it means to claim that a proposition is a picture. And, indeed, this is what one would

expect given that Wittgenstein is concerned to develop a logical theory of meaning. Indeed propositions can picture reality because of a logical structure and form common to both. (64)

The structure of a picture must however be separated from the picture itself. A picture is a structure and a pictorial relationship,("the correlations of the picture's elements with things"(65)). And not only does a picture have a structure but it must contain within itself the possibility of that structure, and this Wittgenstein identifies as 'pictorial form'. (66) But as well as pictorial form, picture and pictured must also share representational form. By representational form Wittgenstein seems to refer to a conventional, external (i.e. to the picture itself) stipulation or projection linking the elements of the picture with the objects pictured. (67) But more fundamentally the very least which must be common between pictured and picture, if language is to picture reality, is logical form. "What any picture, of whatever form, must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it - correctly or incorrectly - in any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of reality." (68) Unless the 'form of reality' is identical with the form of our pictures of it we would be unable to construct pictures of reality.

The 'picture theory' thus involves an identity of structure

and a correlation of elements between the picture and the pictured. Now to speak of a correlation of elements is of course to claim that there is a correspondence between each element of the picture (of the propositional sign) (69) and each element of the situation pictured. (70) But how does this apply to 'negative' facts? Is there a 'negative' element in propositions corresponding to the 'negative' element in the facts? That is, if one takes as an example of a proposition stating a negative fact, 'the book is not on the desk', are we to say that the word 'not' names or stands for an object? Now such an 'object', if it existed, would be a representative for a logical constant - other logical constants being 'is', 'or', 'if - then', 'some' etc. For Wittgenstein, however, logical constants do not represent. "My fundamental idea is that the 'logical constants' are not representatives; that there can be no representatives of the logic of facts." (71) Such constants are not elements of the picture but things we do with the picture. Thus there are no negative facts. Now logical constants constitute the logical form of propositions and so it follows that logical form as such cannot be represented. "Propositions can represent the whole of reality; but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it - logical form." (72)

Further, Wittgenstein introduces the adjective 'formal' to refer to 'features' of logical form. And for Wittgenstein 'formal properties' and 'formal relations' are sharply distinct from genuine properties and relations. Examples of such formal properties and concepts are the concepts of 'complex', 'fact',

'function', 'number'. (73) Formal concepts are contrasted with 'proper concepts' which can be "represented by means of a function", (74) i.e. can be substituted for the variable x in a propositional function. Formal concepts cannot be so substituted and belong, rather, to the form of language. For to say of anything that it is a function, fact, complex or name is to say something which, if it could be true, would have no <u>significant denial</u>. Such 'propositions' might then be said to be statements about the limits of what can be said, in the sense that they point to logical conditions of language and its application; but because they do so point, they in another sense transgress the limits of language for they fail the test of significant denial. When something "falls under a formal concept as one of its objects, this cannot be expressed by means of a proposition. Instead it is shown in the very sign for this object. (A name shows that it signifies an object)." (75) To ask "whether a formal concept exists is nonsensical" for no proposition can state what can be shown. (76) Indeed for Wittgenstein neglect of this distinction between "formal concepts and concepts proper...pervades the whole of traditional logic." (77) And it is not only logic which is affected; indeed we are told

> "most of the propositions and questions to be found in philosophical works are not false but nonsensical. Consequently we cannot give any answer to questions of this kind, but can only establish that they are nonsensical. Most of the propositions and questions of philosophers arise from our failure to understand the logic of our language." (78)

In so far as the statements of philosophy are attempts to

articulate these formal, logical, features of language, without which no proposition could be meaningfully asserted, they must fail to make any significant statement.

> "The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science - i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy - and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions." (79)

All this follows from an 'internal' examination of the nature of a proposition as a picture, i.e. what does and does not constitute a name in Wittgenstein's sense of the term, what is and what is not a 'proper' concept and thus capable of employment in propositions. But the same conclusions can be reached if we examine more fully what is involved in propositions picturing facts, where the sense of a proposition consists in its truth conditions. We know what a proposition means when we know what has to be the case if it is true. If we know that then we simultaneously know what has to be the case if it is false. For every true proposition there is some determinate state of affairs that makes it true. If the truth conditions are not satisfied the proposition is false. But states of affairs are contingent facts. (80) Can there then be propositions which picture necessities in the world? Wittgenstein specifically rules this out (a) because "there is no a priori order of things" and thus (b) "there are no pictures that are true a priori." (81)

There are however logical propositions which are true a priori; they are tautologies and their negations are contradictions. (82) But as analytic propositions they say nothing, they picture nothing, they are sense-less. (83) Though logical, tautological propositions can be called 'true', strictly speaking this is incorrect. A tautology is not a picture, not a proposition, and cannot be called 'true' because it is 'made true'. (84) What has no factual truth conditions yields no information concerning the world. Necessary 'propositions' are 'sense-less' (sinnlos) but they are not 'nonsensical' (unsinnig). "They are part of the symbolism, just as '0' is part of the symbolism of arithmetic." (85) Metaphysical propositions, understood as propositions which claim to be both necessary and factual, are nonsensical. Necessity belongs solely to logic; statements about what 'is the case' are non-necessary, contingent. And this claim has important consequences for Natural Theology. As Anscombe states:

> "Here it is worth remarking that the truth of the Tractatus theory would be death to natural theology; not because of ... verificationism, but simply because of the picture theory of the 'significant proposition'. For it is essential to this that the picturing proposition has two poles, and in each sense it represents what may perfectly well be true. Which of them is true is just what happens to be the case. But in natural theology this is an impermissible notion; its propositions are not supposed to be the ones that happen to be true out of pairs of possibilities; nor are they supposed to be logical or mathematical propositions either." (86)

Essentially then metaphysics is the attempt to utter the unsayable. To say what can only be shown in language. Propositions cannot be logical pictures of their logical form. (87) Rather, the showing mentioned is accomplished by every proposition, but is particularly the function of the tautologies or 'senseless' propositions of logic. The tautologies show 'the logic of the world'. To represent "logical form, we should have to be able to station ourselves with propositions somewhere outside logic, that is to say outside the world." (88) And, for Wittgenstein, this is impossible, because there must be a correspondence between the logical form of language and that of reality if language is to function as a picture of the world. Logic must exist before there can be any experience of the world, but there can be no experience of logic.

> "The 'experience' that we need in order to understand logic is not that something or other is the state of things, but that something is: that, however, is not an experience. Logic is prior to every experience - that something is so. It is prior to the question 'How?' not prior to the question 'What?'" (89)

> "Logic is not a body of doctrine but a mirror image of the world. Logic is transcendental." (90)

Now compare this 'experience' necessary for logic with what we saw Wittgenstein claim[s] concerning the mystical feeling: "It is not how things are in the world that is mystical but that it exists." (91) To understand logic we need a certain 'experience', not of how the world is (not of how things are in the world) but of the existence of something. Is there

a single realm of 'experience' being referred to here? Does logic along with ethics, aesthetics etc. share a single quasi-experiential ground?

To examine this question let us see what is involved in having this logical 'experience'. It cannot, of course, be knowledge of the truth of a factual proposition, since whether or not a factual proposition is true is a matter of <u>how</u> things are in the world. It must then be, as B. F. McGuinness expresses it:

> "an experience of the existence of objects whose existence is not a matter of experience in the ordinary sense: it must consist, that is, in acquaintance with simple objects and with their possibilities of combination. Not that the logician must be able to list the objects which figure in the facts that he knows and in the possibilities that he can envisage. In order to do logic he must be able to answer the question 'What?' but the answer he must be able to give is not a catalogue of the objects that there are ... but simply the answer that there are objects." (92)

So logic comes after the objects but before the existent atomic facts. What objects there are is a non-empirical, non-logical matter. It is of course an empirical matter which combination of objects are actual. It is a logical matter which combinations of objects are possible. But what objects there are to be combined is neither.

What is given by experience is always facts. A grasp of the 'substance of the world', which we <u>show</u> we have in being able to describe the facts we experience, is not given by any

experience. As any experience must be an experience of a possible contingent situation, it is not possible that experience could tell us anything about logic. Logic precedes the uttering of propositions, precedes their possible truth or falsity. Thus, according to Wittgenstein, this logical 'experience' is possessed by anyone who understands propositions (93), as something implicit in his thought and use of language.

Allow me, now, to trace further similarities between this logical 'experience' and the mystical feeling. First of all, both are feelings directed towards the existence of the world. 'That something is' and 'that there is a world' both share the same objective referent. (94) Both are equally disinterested in the 'how' of the world, but share a common interest in 'that' there is a world. Secondly, the mystical feeling is directed towards the world conceived as a limited whole; and surely we are presented with the world conceived as a whole - as all that is the case and thus limited-at the very beginning of the Tractatus? 'The world is all that is the case,' 'the world is determined by the facts,' 'the world divides into facts.' It is surely only of the world, considered as a limited whole, that such comments can intelligibly be made? Further, as again McGuinness states:

> "What logic studies is spoken of as if it were the true reality: objects are what is unutterable and subsistent ... Constantly he (Wittgenstein) talks about totalities - the totality of objects (5.5561), the totality of existing states of affairs (2.04), the totality of true propositions (4.11) ...; this seems to me like the 'view of the world

> as a limited whole which we are told that the mystic has." (95)

Thirdly, just as that which is mystical cannot be expressed but 'makes itself manifest', so too, the logician is committed to silence. And yet the logician can present us with the form of reality and the mystic with the 'solution to the problem of life'. Thus it seems to me that the logical 'experience' is very similar to the mystical feeling. And yet it may seem there is a difference, because is not the logical 'experience' directed towards explicating the general form of reality - the general form of the <u>world</u> - while the mystical feeling is directed towards resolving the problem of the sense or purpose of <u>life</u>? This does seem like a real difference and yet the thoughts of the logician are <u>part</u> of what is involved in mysticism. To see how Wittgenstein resolves, or rather dissolves the difference between world and life it will now be necessary to explore Wittgenstein's thoughts on solipsism. Thoughts again, which cannot be stated but make themselves manifest, are shown.

When the <u>Tractatus</u> informs us that 'logic is transcendental' what is not, of course, meant is that the logical propositions state transcendental truths. Rather, what <u>is</u> meant is some such idea as expressed in this remark of Wittgenstein's:

> "There seemed to pertain to logic a peculiar depth - a universal significance. Logic lay, it seemed, at the bottom of all the sciences - For logical investigation explores the nature of all things ... It takes its rise ... from an urge to understand the basis, or essence, of everything empirical." (96)

Logical propositions show the form of reality and what they show is something which pervades everything sayable. What logic displays is the 'scaffolding of the world' and in saying that logic displays this scaffolding, Wittgenstein is reminding us that logical propositions are concerned only with logical form. (97) Yet logic has a connexion with the world so that, although logical propositions are not about the objects of the world, they still show something about the world. (98) For Wittgenstein,

> "logic pervades the world: the limits of the world are also its limits. So we cannot say in logic 'the world has this in it, and this, but not that.' For that would appear to presuppose that we were excluding certain possibilities, and this cannot be the case, since it would require that logic should go beyond the limits of the world; for only in that way could it view those limits from the other side as well. We cannot think what we cannot think; so we cannot think what we cannot <u>say</u> either." (99)

What Wittgenstein is maintaining here should, I hope by now, be reasonably clear. But what is difficult here is, first of all, that Wittgenstein intends the above remarks to be a comment on the claim, '<u>the limits</u> of <u>my language</u> mean <u>the limits</u> of <u>my world</u>," (100) and secondly, his further claim, that what is said above provides the "key to how much truth there is in solipsism." (101) As Wittgenstein continues:

> "For what the solipsist <u>means</u> is quite correct; only it cannot be <u>said</u>, but makes itself manifest. The world is <u>my</u> world: this is manifest in the fact that the limits of <u>language</u> (of

> that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world. The world and life are one. I am my world." (102)

What is, first of all, unexpected here is the sudden introduction of the personal pronoun in expressions such as 'my language' and 'my world'. Up to this point Wittgenstein's concern seemed to be with 'the world' (the logical form of reality, the essence of the world). Secondly, what does Wittgenstein mean when he says 'the world is my world,' 'the world and life are one' and 'I am my world?' To understand fully what Wittgenstein is maintaining here it will be necessary, first of all, to examine his analysis of the 'self'.

Now Wittgenstein maintains that "there is no such thing as the subject that thinks or entertains ideas", i.e., no such thing as the "human soul with which psychology deals." (103) There exists no thinking or knowing soul or self in the world. At the same time, Wittgenstein does believe in the existence of another self - a metaphysical or philosophical self - which is a "limit of the world not a part of it." (104) The metaphysical subject or self cannot be identified with my body, nor with my experience or any part of it. That which experiences is not itself an experience, is not part of the world. The metaphysical self must be looked for in the boundary or limit of the world. But why is the metaphysical self not part of the world? To answer this Wittgenstein provides us with the analogy of an eye and its visual field; i.e., the metaphysical subject is related to the world as the eye is related to its visual field. The eye of the visual field is the source of the visual field but not a constituent of it. (105) The metaphysical self is

that 'outside' the world on which the existence of everything depends. As P. Hacker states: "The owner of experience in general, the possessor of all the experience I can ever encounter, is the metaphysical subject." (106)

Now, the notion of a metaphysical subject is introduced by Wittgenstein as a comment on the earlier propositions which claimed that 'the world and life are one' and 'I am my world'. What this suggests is that the notion of a metaphysical subject may provide the clue to understanding Wittgenstein's remarks in general here, and on solipsism in particular.

Wittgenstein remarks that what brings the "self into philosophy is the fact that the world is my world." (107) Now the claim that 'the world is my world' is the solipsistic claim, I believe, understood as an epistemological thesis; that the self can know nothing but its own modifications or states. The claims 'that the world and life are one' and 'I am my world' are the solipsistic claims understood, I believe, as a metaphysical thesis; that the self is the only existent thing. Now, if we refer to the Notebooks, we find that Wittgenstein there remarks: "There really is only one world soul, which I for preference call my soul and as which alone I conceive what I call the souls of others." (108) Or again: "only from the consciousness of the uniqueness of my life arises religion, science and art ... And this consciousness is life itself." (109)

Thus the world is identified with life, life is identified with consciousness and consciousness with the self of solipsism. What the solipsist means and is correct in believing is that the world and life are one, that 'man is the microcosm,' that

'I am my world'. Only, although what the solipsist means is correct, it cannot be said, it shows itself.

There is another way, in the Tractatus, we can arrive at the same solipsistic conclusion. This way has been labelled by P. Hacker as the 'semantic route to solipsism' (110) and takes, as its starting point, the claim that the 'limits of my language mean the limits of my world.' As we saw, when discussing the topic, by representational form Wittgenstein refers to a method of projection by which the elements of a picture are linked with the objects pictured. And in order for the names of elementary propositions to have meaning, I, the language user, have to think the method of projection. Thus, without my consciousness playing its role, language as such would be impossible. And, as Hacker states:

> "the self which thinks the method of projection cannot ... be captured by the language it creates. The metalinguistic soul (which is the analogue of the metaphysical self or subject) is, as it were, the blind spot upon the retinal image to which nothing in the visual image corresponds ... Without it the comparison of language and reality is impossible." (111)

What the solipsist means is that the world is my world. This ineffable truth shows itself in the fact that the limits of language (of that language which alone I understand) mean the limits of my world.

But the limits of language, and hence of my language, are formed by that which is non-contingent. The limits of logic are the limits of language, the limits of the world, and 'logic is transcendental'. That the world is my world, that I am my

world, that the world and life are one, are all expressions of transcendental solipsism. And all these doctrines are inexpressible. Furthermore, the solipsistic theories make essential reference to a metaphysical self: A self which is a limit of the world not a part of it, about which nothing can be said. This metaphysical self or subject, a limit of the world, on which the existence of everything depends, could intelligibly be identified with God as with my very self. The limit of the world, which from one perspective can be identified as the metaphysical self, can, from another perspective, be called God.

In his Notebooks Wittgenstein states:

> "What do I know about God and the purpose of life? I know that this world exists. That I am placed in it like my eye in its visual field. That something about it is problematic, which we call its meaning. That this meaning does not lie in it but outside it. That life is the world." (112)

Or again: "To believe in a God means to see that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter" (113): this remark being connected with the following in the Tractatus: "How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself in the world." (114) Now we have seen that the content of mysticism - that to which the feeling is directed - is the existence of the world, that there is a world. But what does it mean to have this feeling? Does it manifest itself as a puzzlement concerning a possible divine cause of the world - transcendent to it - but 'giving' the world significance or meaning? This seems

unlikely, for as Wittgenstein states as early as the beginning of the book, "the world is all that is the case." (115) And, holding strictly to this claim, any such divine cause of the world would, per impossible, have to be 'inside' the world - reflect a factual situation - and this would conflict directly with the claim that 'how' things are is of no significance. 'God does not reveal himself in the world.' Further, we do have biographical information, supplied by N. Malcolm, that Wittgenstein could "not understand the conception of a Creator ... or the notion of a being making the world." Indeed we are told, "any cosmological conception of a Deity, derived from the notion of cause ... would be repugnant to him. (116)

Perhaps, then, it is the case that 'God does not reveal himself in the world' because God is identical with the world? Is it the case that the mystical feeling - that the world exists - is felt, precisely because God and the world are identical? That is, the mystical feeling is present because God is the world. Is it pantheism Wittgenstein is presenting us with? Glancing at some passages in the Notebooks might give one this idea. There, Wittgenstein states:

> "The world is given me, i.e. my will enters into the world completely from outside as into something that is already there ... That is why we have the feeling of being dependent on an alien will. However this may be, at any rate we are in a certain sense dependent, and what we are dependent on we can call God. In this sense God would simply be fate or, what is the same thing: The world - which is independent of our will." (117)

The 'alien will' is a reference to the factual character of

reality and so we appear to have postulated the claim that God, fate and world (qua the totality of facts) are synonymous. And yet, we have been told that, 'believing in God means that the facts of the world are not the end of the matter.' As the world qua world is simply the totality of facts in the world ("the world is the totality of facts")(118) what Wittgenstein is stating here cannot be any simple identification of God and the world. As we have already seen, God does not reveal himself in the world, is not identifiable with what is contingently the case - with any particular fact or set of facts - and as the facts which constitute this particular world could have been otherwise, Wittgenstein cannot intend to simply identify God and the world. As it has been stated, "the divinity of the whole is not inherited by component parts of that whole." (119)

Perhaps however, Wittgenstein, while not wishing to suggest that God and the world are identical in this sense, may have another sense in mind. Just as 'logic is transcendental' and manifests itself as the limit of the world, the general form or possibility of the world, so too <u>God is transcendental</u> manifesting himself as the general form or limit of the world of facts, constituting its possibility. God is to be found in the necessary general features of reality, which are precisely what is presupposed in logic. "To give the essence of a proposition means to give the essence of all description, and thus the essence of the world." (120) "The general form of a proposition is: This is how things stand." (121) And we find in the <u>Notebooks</u>: "How things stand is God. God is, how things stand." (122) 'God' then, within the terms of Wittgenstein's theory,

denotes a formal concept. The limit of the world, which from one perspective can be named God, can, from another perspective, be named the metaphysical subject.

Now we have seen how for Wittgenstein both logic and God are transcendental, tracing the link between logic and God, world and life, by means of Wittgenstein's theory of transcendental solipsism. All these constitute the 'unsayables' of the world, are the object of the mystical feeling. But Wittgenstein also maintains that 'Ethics is transcendental' (123). "It is impossible for there to be propositions of ethics. Propositions can express nothing that is higher." (124) The reason for the inexpressibility of ethics is best expounded in the following passage:

> "The sense of the world must lie outside the world. In the world everything is as it is ... in it no value exists ... If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie within the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental. It must lie outside the world." (125)

Now reference has been made here to both (a) the sense of the world and (b) the value of the world. But, as we saw, Wittgenstein has already spoken of the sense of the world in connection with God. And indeed we are told (i) "to believe in God means to see that life has a meaning" (126) and, furthermore, (ii) "the meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God." (127) It is obvious that, for Wittgenstein, there

is no distinction between viewing the world ethically and viewing it religiously.

But what constitutes value? For Wittgenstein "good and evil only enter through the subject. And the subject is not part of the world, but a boundary of the world." Indeed as "the subject is not a part of the world but a presupposition of its existence, so good and evil are predicates of the subject, not properties in the world." (128) "Ethics does not treat of the world. Ethics must be a condition of the world like logic." (129) Or, as Wittgenstein also expresses it, "if good or evil willing affects the world it can only affect the boundaries of the world, not the facts, what cannot be portrayed by language but can only be shown in language." (130)

Now we have introduced the notion of 'willing' but before examining the concept of the will, and its relation to ethics, allow me to reiterate why ethical propositions cannot be 'portrayed in language'. All that happens, everything in the world, is accidental. All significant propositions are contingent, i.e., describe states of affairs in the world. As the only necessity is logical necessity and value must be non-accidental, so value - if it exists at all - must be outside the world. Given the 'picture theory of meaning' this makes 'statements' of value inexpressible, but the conclusion only follows if we accept the premise of the non-contingency of the ethical - a premise which Wittgenstein in no way argues for but simply asserts. Thus, the fact that there are no ethical propositions only follows from, or is a consequence of, the 'picture theory', if we accept the prior premise or assumption of the non-contingency of the ethical.

However, to continue, Wittgenstein, as we saw, has now introduced the notion of the 'will' in his analysis of good and evil. But how does the will express itself in an ethical manner? Well the 'will is an attitude of the subject to the world' and, furthermore, 'the subject is the willing subject', (131) by which comment I take Wittgenstein to be claiming that the metaphysical subject and the willing subject are one and the same. And as further confirmation of this claim, Wittgenstein also states: "If the will did not exist, neither would there be that centre of the world, which we call the I and which is the bearer of ethics." (132)

But what does it mean for the subject, considered as ethical will, to have an attitude to the world? Wittgenstein expresses the point in these terms: "The world is independent of my will." There is no logical or causal connection between what I will and what actually occurs in the world. Therefore, the will is not concerned with the facts of the world, precisely because neither good nor evil willing can change or control the facts. And the difference good or evil willing makes is that they make the world - considered as a whole - "a wholly different one. The world must ... to speak, wax or wane as a whole. As if by accession or loss of meaning." (133)

The world is given and my will, understood as the seat of ethical attributes, "enters into the world completely from outside as into something that is already there." (134) But this 'entering into' poses a problem for Wittgenstein. It does so because it engenders the "feeling of being dependent on an alien will," which 'alien will' we "can call God" or "fate" or,

indeed, just simply the "world". (135) But it is of the essence of the ethical to 'make a difference,' to transform or transcend the world - to make it a 'wholly different world.' "I can make myself independent of fate." (136) But surely this suggests a complete independence of the world from my will - an independence, which Wittgenstein articulates in the claim, "there are two godheads: the world and my independent I." (137)

On the one hand, we appear to have 'God', 'fate', the 'alien will'; on the other hand, we have will, considered as the ethical subject. On the one hand, we have a limit of the world which, from one point of view, can be called God and, from another point of view, the metaphysical self. On the other hand, we have a limit of the world which, from another point of view, we can call the willing I.

There is, however, a resolution of this 'difficulty' and it is to be found in an analysis of the meaning of good and evil. But if, "what is good and evil is essentially the I, not the world", (138) what do good and evil mean here? "Simply the happy life is good, the unhappy bad ... the happy life seems to be justified, of itself, it seems that it is the only right life." (139) And in what does the happy life consist? Well, in order to live happily, "I must be in agreement with the world. And that is what 'being happy' means. I am thus, so to speak, in agreement with that alien will on which I appear dependent. That is to say: 'I am doing the will of God.'" (140) Thus we have the resolution of the problem of the 'second Godhead', a resolution which is achieved when the 'willing I' is reconciled with, is united with, the world; a reconciliation which manifests

itself with the will being in complete agreement with the world, the 'alien will', accepting the world and the facts as they are. (141) Further, we are told the happy life is justified of itself. In the Tractatus Wittgenstein speaks of a kind of reward or punishment which resides in the ethical action itself. (142) Indeed, it is the fact that the reward or punishment is internal which allows us to characterise the action as ethical. The contrast is, of course, with an action where reward or punishment follow what has been done and are external to it. The reasoning behind this point is not too difficult to follow. Since the good life is the happy life - and happiness consists in being in agreement with the world as it is - the very mark of an unethical action or evil or unhappy life is an action where so-called moral worth resides in certain contingent consequences occurring, certain events being or not being the case. "The happy life is more harmonious than the unhappy." (143)

Further, Wittgenstein states, "only a man who lives not in time but in the present is happy." (144) But what does it mean to live not in time, but in the present? "Whoever lives in the present lives without fear and hope." (145) To live in 'time' means to have fears and hopes, to expect and hope for consequences to occur in the world. Thus to live in 'time' means one is not living in agreement with the world, one is not happy. The man who is happy, content, is the man who has no other "purpose except to live." (146) And such a man, living in the present, has eternal life. (147) Indeed such a man has no fear, not even in the face of death, not because he can survive death and achieve everlasting existence, but rather because the

mark of his living in the present is his independence from the fear and hopes of the world. Regarding eternal life, understood as a state of existence attained by surviving death, Wittgenstein has this to say:

> "Not only is there no guarantee of the temporal immortality of the human soul, that is to say of its eternal survival after death; but, in any case, this assumption completely fails to accomplish the purpose for which it has always been intended ... The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time." (148)

The good life, then, is life lived in the present, this is what it means to have eternal life. And further, "the good life is the world seen sub specie aeternitatis ... The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view sub specie aeternitatis from outside." (149) And this of course is, as we have seen, the mark of the mystical feeling. Viewing the world as a limited whole and sub specie aeterni. Ethical experience is mystical experience.

But how can a man achieve the state of seeing things sub specie aeterni? How can a man be happy at all in a Wittgensteinian sense? "Through the life of knowledge", (150) we are told. The aim is to place oneself in agreement with the world by knowledge of the world. Such knowledge, however, cannot be equated with factual knowledge (knowledge in the world) but must, of course, be equated with the 'knowledge of the world' achieved intellectually by the man who has read and mastered the Tractatus. In logic, a correct understanding of the logical form of propositions, which is the form of reality,

leads to an acceptance of the world as it is - to the contentment of the happy man. In the 'propositions' of the Tractatus we 'see' the nature of reality and are intellectually and, therefore, ethically content. As Wittgenstein states: "Perhaps this book (the Tractatus) will be understood only by someone who has himself already had the thoughts that are expressed in it." (151)

I hope my synopsis of the Tractatus and of Tractarian mysticism and the mystical themes has shown the essential unity of the work, the genesis of the ideas expressed being discovered in the basic mystical feeling or 'experience'. To picture the world at all in language, to know any facts in the world, we must, first, be shown the general form of reality, the essence of the world (logic), and, having had the essence of the world thus displayed, we can then place ourselves in agreement with it, be happy because we are content, seeing things, not from the viewpoint of particular possibilities, but from the viewpoint of the present - the eternal (ethical). But, one may feel compelled to ask: What justification is there for using the term 'mystical' here? Is there a single, quasi-experiential mystical ground for logic, God and ethics? Is what Wittgenstein is talking about in any way related to genuine mystical experience? Certainly, given the use of the term 'God' in the articulation of the thesis, the 'experience' in question could in no way be thought of as an orthodox Christian theistic mystical experience. B. F. McGuinness has, however, claimed that, on the basis of an examination of

mystical texts and commentators' remarks on the texts, there is a common enough mystical state which agrees with the feelings described by Wittgenstein. He relates an example of a mystical state, recorded by W. James, which he believes will illustrate the notion of 'cosmic consciousness' displayed by Wittgenstein.

> "The prime characteristic of cosmis consciousness is a consciousness of the cosmos, that is, of the life and order of the universe. Along with the consciousness of the cosmos there occurs an intellectual enlightenment which alone would place an individual on a new plane of existence - would make him almost a member of a new species. To this is added a state of moral exultation, an indescribable feeling of elevation, elation and joyousness, and a quickening of the moral sense which is fully as striking and more important than is the enhanced intellectual power. With these come what may be called a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life, not a conviction that he shall have this but the consciousness that he has it already." (152)

But is there any reason to suppose that Wittgenstein had any experiences which could be classified as mystical, and could be seen as the 'experiential basis' for the thoughts expressed in the Notebooks and the Tractatus? To answer this particular problem I wish now to examine Wittgenstein's 'Lecture on Ethics' where Wittgenstein describes three experiences he had which he there describes as having 'absolute value'. I shall analyse this 'Lecture', not only to spotlight the three experiences he there mentions, but also to examine further Wittgenstein's ideas on the inexpressibility of religion and ethics.

At the time of the 1929 'Lecture' Wittgenstein had abandoned his 'picture theory of meaning' and with it talk of ethics as transcendental. Yet his account of the nature of ethics and religion was retained though of course ethics is now not described as transcendental but as 'supernatural'. (153) Furthermore, Wittgenstein is prepared, in the 'Lecture' to state why a 'supernatural' approach to ethics and religion is correct. He maintains that it has its genesis in a need to 'go beyond' language and the world and he sees it as a temptation to which he is sympathetic. But before examining this point in detail, let me explore a distinction made by Wittgenstein, early in the 'Lecture', between relative and absolute (ethical) value.

He states:

> "Supposing that I could play tennis and one of you saw me playing and said 'Well you play pretty badly' and suppose I answered: 'I know, I'm playing badly but I don't want to play any better,' all the other man could say would be, 'Ah then that's all right.' But suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said, 'You're behaving like a beast,' and then I were to say, 'I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better,' could he then say, 'Ah, then that's all right?' Certainly not; he would say, 'Well you ought to want to behave better.' Here you have an absolute judgement of value, whereas the first instance was one of a relative judgement." (154)

In the case of the example of relative value, in what circumstances would the replies of the tennis player and the onlooker be inappropriate? Well, if the tennis player wants to

play well, wants to become a future tennis champion then his reply and the response of the onlooker (providing he is aware of his ambition) would be inappropriate. That is, his tennis playing should be directed at improving his strokes, his timing etc., items he must perfect if his ambition of being champion is ever to be achieved; and this being his aim it would be inappropriate for him to reply in the way stated and equally for the onlooker not to say that he ought to play better. But note it is only if the tennis player has an aim, an end, outside the immediate 'tennis playing situation' that such replies as those given could be inappropriate. But the same is not true, Wittgenstein argues, in the situation of absolute moral value. There the goodness of the action itself 'is its own reward'. It is not necessary to assume non-moral ends in view to justify the moral use of the term 'ought'. One simply ought to want to be a good man. Now given this characterization of the difference between relative and absolute value what does this tell us about the nature of relative and absolute judgements of value?

Well, what constitutes a relative judgement of value for Wittgenstein is that "it can be shown to be mere statements of facts", i.e., what it means to be a good tennis player can be understood as 'he serves well', 'he has a good forehand' etc. (155) But "no statement of fact can ever be, or imply, a judgement of absolute value".(156) The facts are ethically neutral and furthermore "words will only express facts." (157) Facts and propositions stand on the same level and this entails that there are "no propositions which in any absolute sense are

sublime, important or trivial." (158) No propositions can be used to articulate what is meant by absolute or ethical values. But then what does it mean to use such expressions as 'absolute value'; what are they an attempt to express? Wittgenstein states:

> "My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely, hopeless. Ethics, so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life ... can be no science ... But it is a document of a tendency in the human mind which I personally cannot help respecting deeply and I would not for my life ridicule it." (159)

Or again: "We thrust against the limits of language. Kierkegaard, too, recognised this thrust and even described it in much the same way" (as a thrust against paradox). (160) For this reason a "certain characteristic misuse of our language" runs through all ethical and religious expressions, because "nonsensicality was their very essence." (161) And this characteristic misuse expresses itself in the case of both ethics and religion in that ethical and religious expressions "<u>seem</u>, prima facie, to be just <u>similes</u>." (162) That is, e.g., the terms right and good as used in ethics and the predicates which we apply to God such as power and love seem to be analogous to, have some similarity with, the use which these terms have in non-ethical and non-religious contexts. But this is to mislead and for the following reason.

> "A simile must be the simile for something. And if I can describe a fact by means of a simile I must also be able to drop the simile and to describe the facts without it. Now in our case as soon as we try to drop the simile and simply to state the facts which stand behind it, we find that there are no such facts. And so, what at first appeared to be a simile now seems to be mere nonsense." (163)

But our need to communicate in this context arises, according to Wittgenstein, from our desire to verbalise certain experiences: experiences which Wittgenstein here claims are the experiential basis of ethical and religious value. Wittgenstein identifies three such experiences. The first one is "my experience par excellence" and Wittgenstein continues, "I believe the best way of describing it is to say that when I have it I wonder at the existence of the world." (164) The second experience is the "experience of feeling absolutely safe" and the third experience is that of "feeling guilty". (165) Wittgenstein relates these experiences specifically to religious claims in the following way:

> "The first of them is, I believe, exactly what people were referring to when they said that God had created the world; and the experience of absolute safety has been described by saying that we feel safe in the hands of God. A third experience of the same kind is that of feeling guilty and again this was described by the phrase that God disapproves of our conduct." (166)

But, as might be expected, just as it is impossible in principle to meaningfully communicate religious claims so also

it is impossible in principle to meaningfully describe these experiences which, Wittgenstein claims in this lecture, are the experiential basis of the ethical and religious life. "The verbal expression which we give to these experiences is nonsense." (167) Take the experience of wondering at the existence of the world. Wittgenstein claims that it only makes sense to wonder

> "at something being the case which I could conceive not to be the case ... To say 'I wonder at such and such being the case' has only sense if I can imagine it not to be the case ... But it is nonsense to say that I wonder at the existence of the world, because I cannot imagine it not existing." (168)

Or again Wittgenstein states: "Think for instance about one's astonishment that anything exists. This astonishment cannot be expressed in the form of a question and there is no answer to it. Anything we can say must, a priori, be only nonsense." (169)

But how true is this? Isn't one's astonishment that anything exists an experience and surely experiences are facts in some sense? As Wittgenstein himself states: "they have taken place then and there, lasted a certain definite time and consequently are describable." (170) Or, as Wittgenstein stresses the point in terms very reminiscent of Kierkegaard: "I will make my point still more acute by saying 'It is the paradox that an experience, a fact, should seem to have supernatural value.'" (171) Now Wittgenstein believes it is possible that there is one way to meet this paradox. Instead of describing the first experience mentioned as one of wondering at

the existence of the world, he suggests it should be described as the "experience of seeing the world as a miracle." (172) That is, to see the world as a miracle is to see it from an entirely different point of view than that provided by the scientific point of view. "The truth is that the scientific way of looking at a fact is not the way to look at it as a miracle." (173) Wittgenstein arrives at this conclusion because he believes that once an event, seen as a miracle, is also viewed as a possible candidate for future scientific explanation, then whatever was once considered miraculous about the event disappears. It is absurd to say that "science has proved that there are no miracles" (174) because to state this is to conflate two entirely disparate ways of looking at an event. It is to conflate regarding an event as scientifically explicable (whether or not the specific explanation is known) and regarding an event as a miracle – an event regarded as a miracle being scientifically inexplicable in principle.

But how exactly does this new way of describing the experience of wonder at the existence of the world, i.e., seeing the world as a miracle, help to solve the paradox? Wittgenstein states: "Now I am tempted to say that the right expression in language for the miracle of the existence of the world, though it is not any proposition <u>in</u> language, is the existence of language itself." (175) But <u>how</u> exactly does this restatement dissolve the alleged paradox? The simple answer is it fails to dissolve the paradox. As Wittgenstein continues:

> "all I have said by shifting the expression of the miraculous from an expression <u>by means of</u> language to the expression <u>by the existence</u>

> of language, all I have said is again that we cannot express what we want to express and that all we say about the absolute miraculous remains nonsense." (176)

Perhaps this is a premature conclusion. Would it not be better to say, not that we attempt to express the inexpressible, i.e., talk nonsense, but that rather we simply have not found the "correct logical analysis of what we mean by our ethical and religious expressions " (177)? To this Wittgenstein retorts:

> "Now when this is argued against me I at once see clearly, as it were in a flash of light, not only that no description that I can think of would do to describe what I mean by absolute value, but that I would reject every significant description that anybody could possibly suggest, ab initio, on the ground of its significance. That is to say: I see now that these nonsensical expressions were not nonsensical because I had not yet found the correct expressions, but that their nonsensicality was their very essence." (178)

Now apart from the clear statement which Wittgenstein gives here to the supernatural nature of both ethics and religion, what is of major interest is Wittgenstein's identification of three experiences which he has undergone and to which he not only accords absolute value but also claims that these experiences represent the experiential basis of religion and ethics for him. Thus we appear to have an affirmative answer to the question as to whether or not Wittgenstein did experience mystical sensations. The three experiences he mentions are again (a) the experience, par excellence, of wondering at the

existence of the world, (b) the experience of feeling absolutely safe and (c) the experience of feeling guilty. A further problem arises here as to how correct it is to identify all of these three experiences as primarily mystical experiences. It seems to me that the first and second experiences are clearly mystical in character but the third experience (that of feeling guilty) is not normally, I would have thought, mystical in character, though it is possible that it may have mystical significance. The experience of 'wonder at the existence of the world' surely underpins both the logic and ethics of the Tractatus and the experience of 'feeling absolutely safe', safe no matter what the facts are, living without hope or fear, must surely be the experiential basis of the ethical man in the Tractatus, the happy man.

Further, Anscombe cannot surely be correct when she identifies Wittgenstein's notion of the mystical with the "entirely ordinary feeling" often experienced at the inability of science to provide all the answers. (179) It is in fact the experiences of wonder and security which are the source of, the genesis of, Wittgenstein's dissatisfaction with science. It is because Wittgenstein experienced these feelings that the answers of science could never really satisfy him.

However the 'Lecture' and the argument of the Tractatus still leave unanswered many puzzles. I shall only mention two here. The first puzzle relates to the 'mystical unity' of the Tractarian philosophy and is centred on a problem concerning the notion of 'showing'. The second puzzle relates to

Wittgenstein's claim that there can be no significant religious propositions.

The first problem has been raised by E. Schaper in her part of a symposium on Saying and Showing in Heidegger and Wittgenstein (180) and concerns the univocality of the notion of 'showing' that is operative in the Tractatus. That is, is the same notion of 'showing' being used when it is maintained that the transcendental shows itself in its logical and 'ethico-religious' instantiations? That is, what is shown is different, but is the notion of 'showing' the same that is operative in each case? Take the logical instantiation first. What is shown is the logical form by which a proposition can be a picture of a fact. What the picture, the proposition, has in common with reality, its logical form, cannot be put into words. And it cannot be put into words because any attempt to articulate the formal, logical features of language without which no proposition could be meaningfully asserted would have no 'significant denial'. 'Propositions can represent the whole of reality, but they cannot represent what they must have in common with reality in order to be able to represent it - a logical form'. As Schaper says: "The reason why what we might call formal statements, that is, statements applying formal concepts, do not say anything is that they have no significant denial. In that sense they prescribed limits to what can be said or thought." (181) And speaking of the 'ethico-religious' instantiation of the transcendental and what is shown, and how it is shown, she states:

> "Wittgenstein does not say here (the 'Lecture') or in the Tractatus, however, that the

> experience of wondering at the existence of the world, of seeing the world as a miracle, is incoherent. What he <u>does</u> say is that our seeking to put this experience into words results in nonsensical expressions ... Our attempts to express our experiences here, then, must be quite different from our attempts to express the logical conditions of significant speech. For our difficulty there was that we tried to express what had no significant denial, whereas our difficulty here is that we are inclined to express our wonderment in terms of a supposition that the world might exist contingently, but this is not even an attempt to express a formal truth. Not only is it something that cannot be said, it cannot even be shown." (182)

Technically I believe Schaper is correct here. The notion of 'showing' cannot be the same in the two cases. Yet may I suggest a way of looking at the matter which might mitigate this difficulty. The 'experience' of wonder at the existence of the world is part of the content of the mystical feeling, not 'how' but 'that' there is a world. And just as the 'experience' of wonder at the existence of the world is the quasi-experiential mystical ground for ethics so too, if my previous account has been correct, is it for logic. Now given this same 'experiential' basis for logic and ethics and the conclusion that there can be no saying in logic or ethics - what 'truths' there are 'manifesting' themselves - I think it is at least not difficult to see why Wittgenstein should want to talk about showing here in a univocal sense. This does not, however, alter the fact that both instantiations of the

'transcendental' do not in fact 'show' in the same way - the notions of showing must be different - but it could at least explain why Wittgenstein did not appear to notice a difficulty or discrepancy here; why he thought, as he apparently did, that only one notion of 'show' was at work.

Secondly, I wish now to look at Wittgenstein's account of religious language. According to that account religious assertions and expressions, such as 'God loves all men', seem *prima facie* to be just similes. W. D. Hudson speculates that such a claim is simply mistaken. He states:

> "When a Christian believer, for instance, says that God loves us, I do not think he means to speak of God's attitude towards us as one of which love is an allegory; or when he says that God is almighty, I do not think he means that God has a characteristic of which almightiness is a simile. I think that in both cases he means literally what he says. If he did not he would have no problem of evil on his hands. It is only because Christians believe that God loves us in a perfectly normal sense of 'loves' and that God is almighty in the perfectly normal sense of being able to do whatever is logically possible, that they have to face the question 'Why then does God allow us to suffer pain and loss?'" (183)

Certainly what Hudson says may be true for some religious believers. Perhaps, in particular, true for those for whom the *problem* of evil does not even constitute a *problem*. (But here, of course, if I can use a phrase, we are talking of simple or naive religious belief.) Or, true for those for

whom the problem of evil is just seen as a problem. That is, certainly it is true that for a religious believer to see the problem of evil as a problem, the terms in question must be used in something like a normal sense. However, be that as it may, I am not aware of any theodicy or 'justification of the ways of God to man' which at the conclusion of the argument retains a use, for example, of the term 'loves' as predicated of God which is anything like 'a perfectly normal sense' of 'loves'. And this includes both those theodicies which include and those which exclude eschatological hopes or expectations. As D. Z. Phillips relates in attacking a particular theodicy:

> "There are screams and screams, and to ask of what use are the screams of the innocent ... is to embark on a speculation we should not even contemplate. We have our reasons, final human reasons, for putting a moral full-stop at many places. If God has other reasons, they are his reasons, not ours, and they do not overrule them. That is why, should he ask us to consider them, we, along with Ivan Karamazov, respectfully, or not so respectfully, return him the ticket ... And if there is a 'higher' form of reasoning among God and his angels, where such matters are open for compromise and calculation, then so much the worse for God and his angels." (184)

Phillips' critique here, based as it is on moral considerations, is of course not merely a critique of a particular theodicy, but is a critique aimed at the very possibility of theodicy in general. Be that as it may, what Phillips does highlight is the fact that any theodicy must differentiate between 'God's reasons' and 'our reasons', 'God's love' and

'our love' - a contrast between the divine and human which surely suggests that when any Christian believer says, 'God loves us', he is by no manner of means using the term 'love' in a 'perfectly normal sense'. Indeed isn't this one reason why Christian theologies have found it necessary to formulate a doctrine of analogy?

But of course one must remember that for Wittgenstein what in 'religious language appeared to be a simile is in fact mere nonsense.' Can one accept this claim? If the claim being made here is that language as such is inadequate or incoherent - not that that which it is an attempt to verbalise is incoherent - to serve as a vehicle of communication then I am afraid one must reject the point and on <u>logical</u> grounds too. When Wittgenstein claims that there is something to be discovered, something to be communicated, i.e., religious and ethical value, only language cannot communicate the discovery, language as such being inadequate here, then I think Wittgenstein's claim is open to the following objection, put forward by D. Z. Phillips in another context but equally important and relevant here. "Our language is not a poor alternative to other means of communication, it is what constitutes communication ... There can be an inadequate use of language, but it <u>makes no sense to say that language itself is inadequate</u>." (185) As F. Ramsey expressed the point: "What we can't say we can't say, and we can't whistle it either." (186)

On this particular point we have already seen Wittgenstein make reference to S. Kierkegaard. J. Walker in an article (187)

claims that Wittgenstein probably had Chapter 3 of Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments in mind. Here, Walker informs us, Kierkegaard says things like the following. "The supreme paradox of all thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think." "A limit is precisely a torment for passion." "This unknown something with which the Reason collides when inspired by its paradoxical passion ... Let us call this something: God." And we know also from Malcolm that Wittgenstein held Kierkegaard in high esteem. "He referred to him, with something of awe in his expression, as a 'really religious' man. He had read the Concluding Unscientific Postscript - but found it 'too deep' for him." (188)

For Kierkegaard "religious suffering ... is precisely the consciousness of the contradiction, which is pathetically and tragically incorporated in the consciousness of the religious individual." (189) For Wittgenstein too, the tendency of the religious man is 'to run against the boundaries of language', a tendency, which we saw, although 'perfectly absolutely hopeless', is one which Wittgenstein 'personally cannot help respecting deeply.'

PART B

Although it is true that Wittgenstein's later philosophy can only really be understood when viewed against the background of a continuous struggle with the ideas expressed in the earlier work - the Tractatus - the essential continuity of the

'earlier' and 'later' philosophy must not be neglected. The 'sense of a proposition', the 'structure of language', these were the problems which puzzled Wittgenstein in his 'early philosophy' and it is to these same problems that Wittgenstein provides the very different answers of the Investigations (1) period. The 'picture theory of language' is rejected because it neglects the importance of use in language and the multifarious uses that language can have. Language does not have only one function, to picture or state facts. As P. Hacker states:

> "Although the change runs deep, it is instructive to conceive of it as a transformation rather than a substitution, a matter of rotating the axis of the investigation one hundred and eighty degrees about the fixed point of our real need. In the Tractatus the structure of language or thought provided the insight into the structure of reality. In the Investigations the structure of language is still the subject of investigation. Moreover it is still isomorphic with the structure of reality, not because language must mirror the logical form of the universe, but because the apparent 'structure of reality' is merely the shadow of grammar." (2)

What however does it mean to claim that for Wittgenstein, in this period of his thought, 'the apparent structure of reality is merely the shadow of grammar'? To explicate this thought is, in an important sense, to elucidate the Wittgensteinian conception of language and its relation to reality as propounded in the Investigations period and this I shall now proceed to do.

"For a large class of cases - though not for all - in which we employ the word 'meaning' it can be defined thus: the meaning of a word is its use in the language." (3) Or again: "Look at the sentence as an instrument, and at its sense as its employment." (4) Thus, "to understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique." (5)

It is simply wrong to believe that language can only portray or represent reality in one unique way, that "thought, language (must be) the unique correlate, picture, of the world"; that "proposition, language, thought, world, stand in line one behind the other, each equivalent to each." (6) There are countless kinds of sentences, "countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols', 'words', 'sentences'. And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence, and others become obsolete and get forgotten." (7) Again: "Think of the tools in a tool-box: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screwdriver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws. - The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects." (8) The mistake of the Tractatus is to take as a paradigm factual or descriptive sentences, then assessing the meaningfulness, the very verbalisability of all other sentences in terms of this paradigm. Instead of trying to discover 'the general form of propositions' rather, Wittgenstein claims, what should be spotlighted are the 'games' we play with language - the 'language-games' - because in so doing we are pointing to the

different uses and variety of language.

According to Malcolm, the idea of language as playing games with words occurred to Wittgenstein on the occasion of seeing a football match.

> "One day when Wittgenstein was passing a field where a football game was in progress the thought first struck him that in language we play games with words. A central idea of his philosophy, the notion of a 'language-game', apparently had its genesis in this incident." (9)

But what kind and variety of uses of language has Wittgenstein in mind when he talks of 'language-games'? He states:

> "Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others:
> Giving orders and obeying them -
> Describing the appearance of an object, or giving its measurements -
> Constructing an object from a description (a drawing) -
> Reporting an event -
> Speculating about an event -
> Forming and testing a hypothesis -
> Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams -
> Making up a story; and reading it -
> Play acting -
> Singing catches -
> Guessing riddles -
> Making a joke; telling it -
> Solving a problem in practical arithmetic -
> Translating from one language into another -
> Asking, thanking, cursing, greeting, praying.

It is interesting to compare the multiplicity of the tools in language and of the ways they are used, the multiplicity

of kinds of word and sentence, with what logicians have said about the structure of language. (Including the author of the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.)" (10)

Given, however, that language has this multiplicity and variety of use, what do the various 'language-games' we play with words have in common with each other? What, in other words, makes them into language or parts of language? In the Brown Book Wittgenstein has this to say:

> "We are not however, regarding the language-games which we describe as incomplete parts of a language, but as languages complete in themselves, as complete systems of human communication." (11)

However in the Philosophical Investigations Wittgenstein states:

> "For someone might object against me: 'You take the easy way out! You talk about all sorts of language-games, but have nowhere said what the essence of a language-game, and hence of language, is: what is common to all these activities, and what makes them into language or parts of language' ... Instead of producing something common to all that we call language, I am saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common which makes us use the same word for all, - but that they are related to one another in many different ways. And it is because of this relationship, or these relationships, that we call them all 'language'....Consider, for example, the proceedings that we call 'games'. I mean board-games, card-games, ball games, Olympic games, and so on. What is common to them all? - Don't say: 'There must be something common,

> or they would not be called "games"' - but look and see whether there is anything common to all: - For if you look at them you will not see something that is common to all, but similarities, relationships, and a whole series of them at that. To repeat: don't think, but look! ... And the result of this examination is: we see a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail: I can think of no better expression to characterise these similarities than 'family resemblances'; for the various resemblances between members of a family: build, features, colours of eyes, gait, temperament, etc. etc. overlap and criss-cross in the same way. - And I shall say: 'games form a family.'" (12)

Words have uses, language gains its intelligibility because in using language we are 'playing games with words' - we are displaying our 'language-games'. But further, not only are the 'language-games' we play with words the condition of the very intelligibility of language but also 'language-games' must be regarded as facets of our 'natural history'. "Commanding, questioning, recounting, chatting, are as much a part of our natural history as walking, eating, drinking, playing." (13) And, just as it would not make much sense to ask for an explanation of, a justification of walking or drinking so the mistake of many philosophers is "to look for an explanation where we ought to look at what happens as a 'proto-phenomenon'. That is where we ought to have said: This language-game is played." (14) Or again, "it isn't a question of explaining a language game by means of our experiences, but

of noting a language-game." (15) "Look on the 'language-game' as the primary thing." (16) Thus the programme of the Investigations is to supply "remarks on the natural history of human beings", bearing in mind "that the language game is so to say something unpredictable. I mean: it is not based on grounds. It is not reasonable (or unreasonable). It is there - like our life." (17)

However, to mention 'natural history' is to emphasise the following aspect of 'language-games'. "To imagine a language means to imagine a form of life." (18) Or again: "the term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life." (19) The expression 'form or forms of life' occurs only five times in the Investigations, and we have already seen two of these uses, but in explicating what Wittgenstein has in mind here I shall add to these references (a) remarks made in other works and (b) remarks made concerning closely related concepts such as "common behaviour of mankind", and "natural history".

Wittgenstein gives only one example of 'form of life' in the Investigations. He states: "Can only those hope who can talk? Only those who have mastered the use of a language. That is to say, the phenomena of hope are modes of this complicated form of life." (20) "The word 'hope' refers to a phenomenon of human life." (21) I take it that the point Wittgenstein is primarily making here is that although hope can be regarded as a 'phenomenon of human life' - 'a form of life' - still it is only insofar as one can imagine a language

of 'hoping' that one can imagine hope as a form of life. As we saw,'to speak a language is part of a form of life.' But simply to say this may mislead unless we remember that 'to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.' This is so because, as Wittgenstein states, "if a lion could talk, we could not understand him." (22) And this is so because "the common behaviour of mankind is the system of reference by means of which we interpret an unknown language." (23) The interpretation and understanding of an unknown language demands a shared 'form of life'. Thus, our inability to understand the 'speech' of a lion is a function of the fact that there is no shared or common 'form of life' between lions and ourselves. Words or language alone cannot enable us to understand language.

> "Why can't a dog simulate pain? Is he too honest? Could one teach a dog to simulate pain? Perhaps it is possible to teach him to howl on particular occasions as if he were in pain, even when he is not. But the surroundings which are necessary for this behaviour to be real simulation are missing." (24)

The fourth reference in the Investigations is the following:

> "'So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?' - It is what human beings say that is true and false; and they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinions but in form of life. If language is to be a means of communication there must be agreement not only in definitions but also (queer as this may sound) in judgements ... It is

> one thing to describe methods of measurement, and another to obtain and state results of measurement. But what we call 'measuring' is partly determined by a certain constancy in results of measurement." (25)

Human convention is at work when we have a 'language-game' or 'form of life' and this convention must include agreement in judgement as well as in definition if language is to be a vehicle of communication. Such conventions are based on uniformities of nature.

> "Disputes do not break out (among mathematicians, say) over the question whether a rule has been obeyed or not. People don't come to blows over it, for example. That is part of the framework on which the working of our language is based (for example, in giving descriptions)." (26)

Wittgenstein is <u>not</u> claiming here that to obey a rule <u>is</u> to act in a manner which others <u>agree</u> in calling obedient. Rather what he <u>is</u> maintaining is that unless there is a uniform and constant behaviour or reaction then the concept of rule, and thus the concepts of agreement or disagreement with the rule, could never be given application. "'If humans were not in general agreed about the colours of things, if undetermined cases were not exceptional, then our concept of colour could not exist.' No:-our concept <u>would</u> not exist." (27) In the absence of certain kinds of regularity - in this case of natural phenomena - the very possibility of applying concepts would be made impossible. What we 'call measuring' can <u>only</u> have application and significance if we are all agreed on the results of our measuring. The very possibility of our

predicating truth or falsity of our judgements depends on a prior constancy and regularity in our judgements.

The fifth and final reference in the Investigations to 'form of life' comes when Wittgenstein remarks: "What has to be accepted, the given, is - so one could say - forms of life." (28) A passage which can be read profitably with this is the following:

> "One might say: "'I know' expresses comfortable certainty, not the certainty that is still struggling." Now I would like to regard this certainty, not as something akin to hastiness or superficiality, but as a form of life. (That is very badly expressed and probably badly thought as well.) But that means I want to conceive it as something that lies beyond being justified or unjustified; as it were, as something animal." (29)

The 'given', the 'forms of life' are 'beyond justification'. Indeed what "people accept as a justification - is shown by how they think and live." (30) Again, Wittgenstein speaking specifically on the nation of justification states: "If I have exhausted the justifications I have reached bedrock, and my spade is turned. Then I am inclined to say: 'This is simply what I do.'" (31) Underlying human conventions are human actions. Thus "... write with confidence 'In the beginning was the deed.'" (32) Stating grounds, giving justifications must come to a conclusion and the conclusion is "not an ungrounded presupposition: it is an ungrounded way of acting." (33) Just as we saw, we must claim 'this language-game is played' so what constitutes the 'given' are the 'forms of life' - 'forms of life' which are part of "the natural history of human beings." (34)

As I hope can be seen from my exposition, the concepts of 'language-game' and 'form of life' are extremely important in Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Indeed the 'language-games' listed, such as asking, thanking, praying etc., and such 'forms of life' listed, as hoping and feeling certain, constitute the 'given' from which philosophy must begin.

If philosophy must begin with these 'forms of life' and 'language-games', what particular role can be alloted to philosophical investigation? The principal elements of Wittgenstein's conception of philosophy are brought together well in the following paragraph:

> "It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones ... And we may not advance any kind of theory. There must not be anything hypothetical in our considerations. We must do away with all explanation, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems. These are, of course, not empirical problems; they are solved, rather, by looking into the workings of our language, and that in such a way as to make us recognise those workings: in despite of an urge to misunderstand them. The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known. Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language." (35)

This being the case means that, for Wittgenstein, a philosophical investigation is therefore "a grammatical one. Such an investigation sheds light on our problem by clearing

misunderstandings away ... misunderstandings concerning the use of words, caused among other things, by certain analogies between the forms of expression in different regions of language." (36) Language unifies that which is in fact diverse. Indeed we are "unconscious of the prodigious diversity of all the everyday language-games because the clothing of our language makes everything alike." (37) Philosophy is thus 'a battle caused by language's bewitchment of our intelligence' and language causes this trouble because we are unable "to turn our eyes away from a picture which holds us captive", and indeed, thus dazzled "we fail to see the actual use of the word(s)" we are studying. (38)

Malcolm well illustrates this novel orientation of Wittgenstein's later conception of philosophy by quoting from a lecture of 1946:

> "What I give is the morphology of the use of an expression. I show that it has kinds of uses of which you had not dreamed. In philosophy one feels <u>forced</u> to look to a concept in a certain way. What I do is to suggest, or even invent, other ways of looking at it. I suggest possibilities of which you had not previously thought. You thought that there was one possibility, or only two at most. But I made you think of others. Furthermore, I made you see that it was absurd to expect the concept to conform to those narrow possibilities. Thus your mental cramp is relieved, and you are free to look around the field of use of the expression and to describe the different kinds of uses of it." (39)

If the genesis of philosophical mistakes is to be found

in the inability of philosophers to widen their vision and to cease focusing on one particular paradigm, then philosophers must be made aware of other paradigms. "The work of the philosopher consists in assembling reminders for particular purposes." (40) If "a main cause of philosophical disease is a one-sided diet: one nourishes one's thinking with only one kind of example"(41), then the philosopher must be made aware of other word uses "so as to command a clear view of the use of our words." (42) And if our "grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity" this is so because one must "distinguish 'surface grammar' from 'depth grammar'." (43) And of course it is 'depth grammar' that the philosopher is interested in. This distinction between 'surface' and 'depth' grammar is important for Wittgenstein because he sees the origin of many philosophical problems in the fact that the 'surface grammar' of the use of a sign or signs misleads us concerning the 'depth grammar' of the sign or signs, i.e., how the sign is in fact used (depth grammar) as opposed to how it appears it is used (surface grammar).

The aim then of philosophy is to fully understand how our words are used because "a perspicuous representation is of fundamental significance because it earmarks the form of account we give, the way we look at things." (44) Indeed, "philosophy simply puts everything before us and neither explains nor deduces anything." (45) And yet, although in one sense nothing is explained, in another sense everything is 'explained' or 'made clear' because we now understand what, prior to being made clear, was the source of philosophical

difficulty and confusion. 'Philosophical propositions' may be simply undisguised grammatical truisms but they do lead to the disappearance of philosophical problems. "Philosophy may in no way interfere with the actual use of language; it can in the end only describe it. For it cannot give it any foundation either. It leaves everything as it is." (46) Thus philosophy produces clarification simply by description of grammar, a description which, it has been claimed, is "not aimed at revealing the structure of the world, but the structure of our thought, not directed at eternal metaphysical verities, but at those facts of the natural history of the mind which will dispel confusion." (47)

To say this, however, is not to imply that for Wittgenstein philosophical 'questions' and 'solutions' are only linguistic problems and solutions. Wittgenstein does not want "to talk only about words." (48) Rather, "grammar tells us what kind of object anything is" (49), and indeed, "essence is expressed by grammar." (50) In fact, according to Wittgenstein's thesis, essence is not only <u>expressed</u> in grammar, but also <u>constituted</u> in grammar. "Like everything metaphysical the harmony between thought and reality is to be found in the grammar of the language." (51) Thus metaphysical sentences are disguised arbitrary grammatical rules: "The only correlate in language to an intrinsic necessity is an arbitrary rule. It is the only thing which one can milk out of this intrinsic necessity into a proposition." (52) The necessary truths which the metaphysician enquires after are 'mere' grammatical necessities. Or, as P. Hacker expresses it: "The necessary truths which the metaphysician seeks in his investigations into the essence of the

world are mere reflections of grammar." (53)

Why, however, should these grammatical rules be labelled arbitrary? Well they are arbitrary because they are autonomous. They are not based on any ultimate constituents of reality, i.e. Tractarian 'objects'. "The connection between "language and reality" is made by definitions of words, and these belong to grammar, so that language remains self-contained and autonomous." (54) Thus grammar cannot 'conflict with' or 'contradict' reality. "The thing that's so difficult to understand can be expressed like this. As long as we remain in the province of the true-false games a change in the grammar can only lead us from one such game to another, and never from something true to something false. On the other hand if we go outside the province of these games, we don't any longer call it 'language' and 'grammar', and once again we don't come into contradiction with reality." (55)

Facts in the world do not provide an 'explanation' of the grammatical rules we do have. Rather, if we do look for an 'explanation' of grammatical rules, we shall have to discover it "in training". (56) Grammar is deposited in our language and in following the grammatical rules which we do we are displaying our social nature. Thus what makes sense within a given grammar is dependent upon the rules that constitute that grammar and, in keeping with the conventionalist nature of the thesis being expressed here, "what looks as if it had to exist, is part of the language. It is a paradigm in our language-game." (57) 'Essences', as we saw, are 'constituted in grammar' - not found but made - and it is in this sense that grammar is autonomous.

Furthermore, as we saw above, grammar is not only autonomous but there are as many different grammars as there are language-games - 'a change in the grammar can only lead us from one such game to another'. The grammatical rules are the rules of particular language-games constituting not only the possibility of sense and nonsense in the 'game' but also the possibility of the application of the game to reality. The move is from language to ontology, and, given that there is such a move and given the foundational nature of the rules of grammar, we can now see clearly why 'to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life'. The 'language-games' and 'forms of life' which exist represent the 'given' of reality. They are there - "like our life". (58) It is in this way that the 'apparent 'structure of reality' is merely the shadow of grammar'.

WITTGENSTEIN AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF

I concluded my account of the 'Tractatus period' of Wittgenstein's philosophy by critically discussing Wittgenstein's claim that the temptation of the religious man was 'to run against the boundaries of significant language' - a temptation which won respect, however, from Wittgenstein. What, in the light of the Investigations' theory of meaning and language, can we say about such a temptation? Can we account for it?

Given the change in point of view arising from the new theory of meaning it would seem that such a temptation ought not to arise in the first place, let alone be accounted for.

This is so because the original temptation - the desire to run against the boundaries of language - can arise only if one is working with a theory of meaning such as the Tractatus account which maintains that factual, scientific discourse is the only significant language. However, once this theory is abandoned and factual, scientific discourse is no longer held to be a paradigm of intelligibility, it is then possible to admit the existence of significant religious assertions and indeed the existence of 'religious language-games'. Indeed, and more fundamentally, it is no longer possible to permit the description of the religious attitude as one of 'running against the boundaries of language'. This is no longer intelligible.

Rather, from the Investigations' point of view, one must simply point to the fact of the existence of religious people - people who, because they adopt a religious attitude to the world, act and talk in a religious way. There simply are 'religious language-games' and 'forms of life' and the task of facing the philosopher is to articulate the grammar of the beliefs and attitudes held.

Thus, from the new point of view, there can be and are significant religious utterances and 'language-games' - 'language-games' which are as verbalisable and as meaningful as any other. Indeed the Tractatus dichotomy between the expressible (factual discourse) and the inexpressible (transcendental) must be abandoned. And, indeed, consistent with this there are no mystical passages or themes in the later work. More fundamentally, however, there are, in fact, only three significant references to religion in these same works and these are, in themselves, cryptic and parenthetical. The three references are: "Essence is expressed by

grammar ... Grammar tells what kind of object anything is (Theology as grammar)" (59); "How words are understood is not told by words alone (Theology)" (60); "You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed - That is a grammatical remark." (61) I wish now to look briefly at these three references in turn and attempt to relate them to the theoretical framework of the later philosophy.

(a) I take it that in referring to 'theology as grammar' Wittgenstein is concerned to make the point that theology articulates the standards of intelligibility implicit in the language of a religion. Furthermore, insofar as theological propositions are concerned with the object of religious responses, i.e., God, grammar articulates what can and cannot be said of the divine object. And in articulating the grammar of a particular religion we are 'expressing essence', that which is the fundamental ground - the 'given' - of the particular religion.

(b) In discussing the meaning or use of words we saw that to understand how a word is used we must see it in its 'natural environment', its natural 'language-game'. And of course to 'imagine a language-game is to imagine a form of life'. "Only in the system has the sign any life." (62) It is not sufficient to examine word usage in a vacuum - by 'words alone' - but rather we must relate the words to the particular 'forms of life' of which they constitute a part. Similarly with theology, theological terms only are meaningful because they are an expression of, constitute a part of, a particular 'form of

life'. Separate theological terms from the 'system in which they have their life' and they lose their significance, their intelligibility.

(c) Finally, the point of Wittgenstein's remark, '"You can't hear God speak to someone else, you can hear him only if you are being addressed" - That is a grammatical remark,' is that the sense in which it is 'impossible' to overhear God speaking to someone is that it would make no sense logically - specifically within the 'Christian', in particular, 'language-game' - to claim or suppose that one could. That is, if someone did claim to 'overhear God' he would be refuted not by employing extra sensitive listening equipment to show him he was mistaken but rather by pointing out to him that within the language-game it simply made no sense to so claim.

As I have said, apart from these parenthetical asides in the major works of the later period, there are no other significant references in these works as to how Wittgenstein believes his later philosophy could or would apply to religious belief. However, we do have some pupils' extant lecture notes on the subject of religious belief. Delivered in Cambridge in 1938 by Wittgenstein, these 'Lectures on Religious Belief' belong to a course of lectures on 'belief', (63) and it is to an examination of the content of these lectures that I now wish to turn.

In these 'Lectures' Wittgenstein appears to be concerned with the central issues of the nature, role and status of religious belief claims and the criteria of rationality

attendant upon such belief claims. The main aim of the 'Lectures' is to attempt to display the grammar of religious belief and to relate the expressions of belief to the human phenomena, to the human attitudes and emotions, in which such belief expressions are embedded.

Wittgenstein begins the 'Lectures' by taking as an example of a religious belief, the belief in the Last Judgement. (64) (This in itself may seem a strange example of a religious belief to adopt for examination insofar as religious belief in the Last Judgement, with its concomitant ideas of eternal punishment, eternal bliss, heaven and hell, is a belief which has had a fluctuating interpretation and uneasy history within, in particular, Christian theology. Be that as it may, it is around such a religious belief that Wittgenstein wishes to base his discussion.)

Wittgenstein poses the following question:

> "Suppose that someone believed in the Last Judgement, and I don't, does this mean that I believe the opposite to him, just that there won't be such a thing? I would say; 'not at all, or not always.' Suppose I say that the body will rot, and another says, 'No. Particles will rejoin in a thousand years, and there will be a Resurrection of you.' If some said: 'Wittgenstein, do you believe in this?' I'd say: 'No.' 'Do you contradict the man?' I'd say: 'No.' If you say this, the contradiction already lies in this. Would you say: 'I believe the opposite,' or 'There is no reason to suppose such a thing'? I'd say neither." (65)

Now I think some fundamental distinctions need to be drawn

here. First of all, in the case of the belief in the 'destiny of the body', it surely is the case that Wittgenstein is contradicting the man who believes that there will be a resurrection of the body. This is so because Wittgenstein does believe and affirm that the exact opposite will occur - the body will not. But this conclusion need not necessarily apply to the belief in the Last Judgement. In this case Wittgenstein simply states that he does not believe in the Last Judgement. Here the denial of belief may simply amount to the claim (a) that Wittgenstein has no thoughts on the matter or (b) that Wittgenstein does not list such a belief among the contents of his beliefs. He is not specifically denying or contradicting the belief in the Last Judgement. He is not specifically affirming, as in the case of the 'destiny of the body', that he believes a state of affairs will occur which is the exact opposite to what the man who believes in the resurrection of the body affirms.

Despite the correctness of the points made here I doubt whether Wittgenstein would be very impressed because, fundamentally, he is not simply interested in correct applications of the term 'contradiction'. Rather his thesis is much more wide ranging and is concerned not simply with affirmations or denials of a particular religious belief but with the whole sphere of religion and religious belief in general. The believer and unbeliever differ not simply in what they affirm or deny - indeed this may be essentially unimportant - but in a much more radical way. Wittgenstein explicates the point in the following way:

> "There are, for instance, these entirely different ways of thinking first of all - which

needn't be expressed by one person saying one thing, another person another thing. What we call believing in a Judgement Day or not believing in a Judgement Day - The expression of belief may play an absolutely minor role ... Why shouldn't one form of life culminate in an utterance of belief in a Last Judgement? But I couldn't either say 'Yes' or 'No' to the statement that there will be such a thing. Nor 'perhaps' nor 'I'm not sure'. It is a statement which may not allow of any such answer." (66)

And this is because:

"It isn't a question of my being anywhere near him, but on an entirely different plane ... I think differently, in a different way. I say different things to myself. I have different pictures." (67)

What however, first of all, does it mean to talk about 'different ways of thinking', to being on 'an entirely different plane'. Wittgenstein gives this further example:

"Take two people, one of whom talks of his behaviour and of what happens to him in terms of retribution, the other one does not. These people think entirely differently. Yet, so far, you can't say they believe different things. Suppose someone is ill and he says: 'This is a punishment,' and I say: 'If I'm ill, I don't think of punishment at all.' If you say: 'Do you believe the opposite?' - you can call it believing the opposite, but it is entirely different from what we would normally call believing the opposite. ... It is this way: if someone said: 'Wittgenstein, you don't take illness as a punishment, so what do you believe?' - I'd say: 'I don't have any thoughts of punishment.'" (68)

Within religious belief to see the events which befall one as either a reward or punishment is, of course, to see these events as in some important sense 'acts of God', products of divine activity. Now of course if one is an atheist one will not see these events as instantiations of divine reward or punishment because the condition necessary to see the events in this way (belief in a God and a God who acts in the world) is not one which is shared with the religious believer. In this sense the atheist 'doesn't have any thoughts of punishment' and may in a sense not be said to believe the opposite, to contradict the believer. However this is so, it appears to me, because such a religious belief, as the belief that events must be seen as a reward or a punishment, is, if I can coin a phrase, an internal or secondary belief of the 'religious form of life', and is dependent for its significance, its very intelligibility on a constitutive or fundamental belief, such as (a) the belief that there is a God and (b) the belief that there is a God who acts in the world. Now while it may be possibly intelligible to claim that atheists do not believe the opposite of religious believers' internal beliefs, can the same point apply to constitutive or fundamental beliefs, such as the belief that there is a God? The believer says 'there is a God', the atheist says 'there is no God'; are they believing the opposite, contradicting one another? It seems to me obvious that they are, indeed how else could one make sense of the atheist's denial of God's existence if this were not the case? To negate a sentence is not to change the meaning or significance of that self same sentence, it is simply to deny the truth of what is asserted.

W. D. Hudson thinks, however, that Wittgenstein's point is a good one here and illustrates its validity in the following way:

> "If someone says 'God is wise' we are entitled to presume that he thinks God exists; but by the same token, if 'God is not wise' is intended as a contradiction, we are entitled to assume that the speaker also takes God to exist. The essential difference between believers and unbelievers is not that sort of difference. It is that the unbeliever refuses to participate in the believer's form of life at all." (69)

From this Hudson concludes that the unbeliever cannot contradict the believer. Now certainly it is true that, if one embarks on a discussion of the wisdom or otherwise of God, one is entitled to presume that one's protagonist assumes the existence of God and, further, that this must be the case if one is to contradict the other in one's conclusions. But of course, in such a discussion of the wisdom or lack of wisdom of God, what one is discussing is, in my terms, an internal belief, and the fact that it is an internal belief which is being discussed is evidenced by the fact that the kind of debate illustrated would, in an important sense, be a theological one. That is, ignoring for the present the problem of the status of assertions involving divine predication, the debate would be between two committed believers. An atheist by definition, however, denies God's existence and thus if he were to mean anything by the claim that 'God is not wise' it certainly cannot involve the assumption that God exists nor be thought of as any kind of

contradiction of the believer. No atheist would want to claim as a substantial article of his credo the belief that God exists. But what about the belief that there is a God - this constitutive or fundamental belief - and the belief that there is no God: Are they contradictory beliefs? For Hudson, the essential difference between the religious believer and the atheist, as we saw, is that the 'unbeliever refuses to participate in the believer's form of life'. But what constitutes his refusal? Well, surely one possible reason may be his belief that there is no God, a belief challenged and contradicted by the believer who says there is a God. Certainly it is true that within the believer's 'form of life' no question of God's existence may arise, and thus, in an important sense, all talk takes place on the basis of this assumption of God's existence. But it surely is not satisfactory to present us with the stark alternative of either participating in the 'religious form of life' or not so participating - such participation or lack of participation being denied any propositional content such that one could say the believer and the atheist contradict one another when they affirm or deny God's existence, i.e., utter a constitutive or fundamental belief.

For Hudson however "an unbeliever is someone who rejects the believer's whole form of life rather than contradicts his beliefs." (70) To further advance his claim, Hudson asks us to consider the criticisms propounded by Professor Strawson in his critique of B. Russell's Theory of Descriptions. He states:

> "Strawson's criticism, invites us to think what we would do if someone, having said 'The king of France is wise', asked us whether we

> considered what he had said to be true or false. We should say that we did not consider it to be either because, since there is no king of France, the question whether or not he is wise simply does not arise. Strawson argues that, whilst anyone who said 'The king of France is wise', would normally be taken to believe that there is a king of France, his statement <u>does not logically entail</u> that there is, as Russell supposed, because if in reply to it we said 'But there is no king of France' we should <u>not</u> consider ourselves, or be considered by others, to have <u>contradicted</u> the speaker. We should not be saying that what he had said is false. We should be saying that the question of its truth or falsity does not arise." (71)

These points are well made and, further, it is not difficult to see how the issue could be moved from the 'secular' to the 'religious': i.e., for, 'the king of France is wise', read, 'God is wise'. However, assume the original claim or statement was not, 'the king of France is wise', but the statement, 'there is a king of France', or to give this a religious reading, 'there is or exists a God'. Such a statement <u>would</u> logically entail that there is alternatively either a king of France or a God such that anyone claiming the opposite, i.e., 'there is no king of France', or, 'there is no God', would be considered to have contradicted the original claim or statement. And if we dwell solely on the religious claim, wouldn't this be an example of the 'unbeliever contradicting the beliefs of the believer'? To this Hudson replies:

> "we shall say that an unbeliever is someone who rejects the whole religious 'form of life' rather than someone who can participate in it

> to the extent of calling the believer's assertions false." (72)

In other words 'contradiction', 'truth' and 'falsity' are terms which can have a role within the 'religious form of life', they can apply to what I have already termed internal beliefs. But to 'reject the whole religious form of life' must be a kind of activity which cannot be given any propositional content, else the possibility of the unbeliever contradicting the believer would emerge as a real possibility. Certainly in 'rejecting the whole religious form of life' there may well be involved a plethora of emotions, attitudes, fears, hopes, desires, etc., but there must surely be also involved a propositional element, for how else could such a rejection be labelled 'a rejection'? The unbeliever must surely deny the believer's claim that there is a God. Yet, Hudson informs us,

> "to contradict another person is to utter the negation of what he has asserted. Unbelief is not accurately described if it is defined as the contradiction, in this strict sense, of belief." (73)

Certainly religious unbelief is not merely the utterance of the negation of that which is asserted by the believer, but it must, at the very minimum, at least involve such an utterance. When the believer says, 'I believe in God', or, 'God exists', and the atheist says, 'I do not believe in God', or, 'God does not exist', not only do they believe they are contradicting each other in the strictest sense of the term, but they are also correct in their beliefs.

Leaving aside the particular issue of contradiction, let me explore more fully now Wittgenstein's references to

'different ways of thinking', to being on 'an entirely different plane'. More particularly then, what is involved in affirming or assenting to a religious belief, such as the belief in the Last Judgement? Wittgenstein states:

> "Suppose somebody made this guidance for life: believing in the Last Judgement. Whenever he does anything, this is before his mind - he has what you might call an unshakeable belief. It will show, not by reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but rather by regulating for all in his life." (74)

Any disagreement between a religious believer and a non-believer is not adequately described if it is expressed in terms of a clash of contrary beliefs. In fact, to uphold a religious belief is, for Wittgenstein, to regulate one's thought and action in a special way - such regulation being given content in the claim that one sees one's actions and the events that befall one in a special way. It might involve, as already suggested, seeing one's life and what happens to one as 'a reward or punishment'. Thus the believer who has this 'unshakeable belief' - who experiences religious claims as absolutes - is on an 'entirely different plane' from the unbeliever. Indeed it may not be the case that this difference is manifested in the expression of the belief because, as we saw, within the context of the belief 'the expression of belief may play an absolutely minor role'. Indeed beliefs in general, and religious belief in particular, are displayed more in what we do than in what we say. The foundation of belief is embedded in action not words, a point evidenced by the fact that, according to Wittgenstein, as a criterion of the firmness of a belief we

must look to what a 'man risks'. (75) As Wittgenstein relates in another context when discussing where justification must stop:

> "The end is not certain propositions striking us immediately as true; i.e. it is not a kind of seeing on our part; it is our acting, which lies at the bottom of the language-game." (76)

Surely, however, one cannot rest content with such a claim? Actions do not take place in a vacuum. How one acts or behaves is determined by the kind of beliefs one has about the situation in question and such beliefs not only can be expressed, talked about, argued about but also assessed as to their truth, to such an extent that it is simply wrong to claim that 'the expression of belief may play an absolutely minor role'. Actions can be appropriate or inappropriate, correct or incorrect, and one ready criterion, which can be deployed to determine the appropriateness, correctness or otherwise of any particular action, may be whether the belief expressed in the action is a true belief, is in accord with how things are in the world. Be that as it may, Wittgenstein's position here has led one critic to maintain that, for Wittgenstein, 'commitment must logically precede rather than follow the entertaining by a Christian of any proposition of his faith' with the consequence that 'religious statements are linked logically to a commitment'. (77)

Is this a correct conclusion? To answer this, let me approach the question by asking whether, for Wittgenstein, one should draw the conclusion that the religious believer's statements can never be understood, if they cannot be contradicted? To this point Wittgenstein replies in a very tentative fashion. He states:

> "If you ask me whether or not I believe in a Judgement Day, in the sense in which religious people have belief in it, I wouldn't say: 'No. I don't believe there will be such a thing.' ... And then I give an explanation: 'I don't believe in ...', but then the religious person never believes what I describe. I can't say. I can't contradict that person. In one sense, I understand all he says - the English words 'God', 'separate', etc. I understand. I could say: 'I don't believe in this,' and this would be true, meaning I haven't got these thoughts or anything that hangs together with them. But not that I could contradict the thing. You might say: 'Well if you can't contradict him, that means you don't understand him. If you did understand him, then you might.' That again is Greek to me. My normal technique of language leaves me. I don't know whether to say they understand one another or not." (78)

(Two interesting points arise here. First of all, I suspect that Wittgenstein is giving expression here to his doubts as to whether religious utterances are intelligible or meaningful in any important sense. Secondly, the use of the word 'normal' is strange here. Such a term surely seems particularly inappropriate unless one is thinking of a situation where criteria of intelligibility are straightforward - such as provided by the Tractatus model? The use of such a term is certainly not in keeping with the new theory of meaning.)

However, to continue, one reason Wittgenstein gives above for the inability of the non-believer to contradict the believer arises from the alleged inability of the believer and non-believer

to agree on a description or account of the believer's beliefs. Now this argument seems particularly weak. Of course there may well be occasions when such difficulties arise; when it is difficult (but not surely impossible) to agree on an actual account of what it is that the believer believes. Surely, however, for the believer to be able to rule out certain descriptions or accounts of his beliefs as erroneous, he must be able to give a propositional content to his own beliefs. And further, what would it mean to claim that a religious believer subscribes to certain beliefs if the believer was unable to give any verbal content to such beliefs? In fact, Wittgenstein later admits that the believer and non-believer may well "describe the same things", (79) but still he remains hesitant as to whether this implies they understand one another. When discussing the term 'God' and its use in language he states the following:

> "The word is used like a word representing a person. God sees, rewards, etc. 'Being shown all these things, did you understand what this word meant?' I'd say: 'Yes and no. I did learn what it didn't mean. I made myself understand. I would answer questions, understand questions when they were put in different ways - and in that sense could be said to understand.'" (80)

Thus the failure to understand - if there is such a failure - does not arise from an inability to understand the meaning of individual words or terms constituting religious sentences, or indeed the presuppositions or implications of their usage. To that extent religious statements are not 'linked logically to a commitment'. But, for Wittgenstein, at another level, under-

understanding may be lacking, precisely because the unbeliever does not share the 'thoughts of the believer or anything that hangs together with them'. Indeed religious statements do not "just differ in respect to what they are about. Entirely different connections would make them into religious beliefs." (81)

Such 'connections' for Wittgenstein, such 'entirely different ways of thinking', what it means to be on 'an entirely different plane', are best expressed, as we have seen, in the claim that the religious believer 'uses pictures'. What, however, does Wittgenstein mean here when he suggests that religious believers use pictures? More particularly what does Wittgenstein mean by the term 'picture', and what is involved in its use? On occasions, by 'picture', Wittgenstein seems to mean nothing more nor less than an ordinary work of art. As he states:

> "Take 'God created man'. Pictures of Michelangelo showing the creation of the world. In general, there is nothing which explains the meanings of words as well as a picture, and I take it that Michelangelo was as good as anyone can be and did his best, and here is the picture of the Deity creating Adam." (82)

The suggestion here seems to be that what is expressed in the proposition, 'God created man', is best elucidated and understood if, along with the utterance of the words, we have presented a picture of the event as well. On other occasions Wittgenstein seems to mean something entirely different by the term 'picture'. For example, when he claims: "'God's eye sees everything' - I want to say of this that it uses a picture", (83) it is very obvious that he is <u>not</u> thinking about or presupposing any

ordinary work of art as constituting the picture involved. Indeed, what possible work of art could elucidate the meaning of such a proposition? Rather, on this occasion, Wittgenstein seems to be referring to some kind of mental idea, image or picture and the reason why he prefers to call this a picture is best illustrated in the following quotation. One:

> "could imagine that religion was taught by means of these pictures. 'Of course, we can only express ourselves by means of picture.' This is rather queer ... I could show Moore the pictures of a tropical plant. There is a technique of comparison between picture and plant. If I showed him the picture of Michelangelo and said: 'Of course, I can't show you the real thing, only the picture' ... Tha absurdity is, I've never taught him the technique of using this picture." (84)

With a non-religious picture it is possible to contrast the picture with the object, scene, event or thing pictured. One can compare picture and pictured. This, however, is not possible in the religious case. One just has the picture, one cannot compare the picture with that which is pictured in reality. In religion, however, "the whole weight may be in the picture." (85) And, not only may the whole weight be in the picture but further, in identifying religious belief with the use of pictures, Wittgenstein maintains all he really wants to achieve is to "draw attention to a particular technique of usage". (86) Indeed in claiming that religious believers use pictures, Wittgenstein maintains, he is only "making a grammatical remark: (what I say) can only be verified by the consequences he (the religious believer) does or does not draw." (87)

In answer to the question of what is involved in the use of religious pictures, according to Wittgenstein, before one can participate in religious belief one must be trained in the technique of using the appropriate picture or pictures. To acquire this technique means learning what conclusions are drawn from the picture and what are not. The conclusions drawn determine what constitutes sense or nonsense in religion. Thus, as an example, take the Wittgensteinian religious picture, 'God's eye sees everything'. Religious believers using this picture would be prepared to claim that the use of such a picture entitles them to draw the conclusion that God knows what will happen in the future, as well as what is happening now. Such a use is in accord with the technique of usage of the picture. But on the other hand, as Wittgenstein asks: "Are eyebrows going to be talked of, in connection with the Eye of God?" (88) Certainly not! Religious believers would regard it as absurd to wonder whether God's eyebrows are bushy or shaggy. The use of the picture, the rules of usage, render such questions absurd.

Now two points must be emphasised here. By characterising religious belief in terms of 'using pictures', Wittgenstein, first of all, is not intending to denigrate religious belief or believers: "I don't want to belittle him (the religious believer)". (89) Secondly, as already noted, Wittgenstein claims to be merely 'drawing attention to a particular technique of usage ... associating a particular use with a picture'. Now in suggesting, as I have done, that by a picture Wittgenstein primarily seems to have in mind some kind of mental picture or image, I was attempting to make sense of statements like the following:

> "The word 'God' is amongst the earliest learnt - pictures and catechisms, etc. But not the same consequences as with pictures of aunts. I wasn't shown (that which the picture pictured). The word is used like a word representing a person. God sees, rewards, etc." (90)

What is distinctive about such a picture is that it, unlike an ordinary picture, cannot be contrasted or compared with that which is pictured. One cannot compare God with the picture of God, as one can compare one's aunt with her picture. All one has in the religious case is the picture, the mental picture or image. But further, and more importantly, does one even have that? If by talk of pictures we are, as Wittgenstein claims, merely 'drawing attention to a particular technique of usage', highlighting what 'conclusions can or cannot be drawn from the pictures', then, surely, these pictures must be identical with or reducible into propositions. That is, all one is doing, in claiming that religious believers use pictures, is to spotlight a particular and unique use of language - a use or technique which can be taught and learnt. Indeed if we are to talk of 'conclusions or consequences drawn', all of which is learnt by being taught a particular technique of use, is it not the case that for picture it would be more appropriate to read proposition? (91)

Now if this is what is involved in using religious pictures, surely - to return to the issue or problem of understanding - the unbeliever or atheist can understand the believer? If the unbeliever is informed, e.g., that certain conclusions are drawn from the use of a picture, given our understanding of picture, he can understand this. So how can it be intelligible to claim that, in some sense, the unbeliever may not understand the believer?

I think Wittgenstein believes there still is a sense in which it may be claimed that the unbeliever does not fully understand the believer's belief - what it 'means to the believer' to use religious pictures.

For the religious believer to use the religious pictures is, as we saw for Wittgenstein, to have 'an unshakeable belief. A belief which will regulate for all in a believer's life.' Now, not only, in religious belief, do the beliefs assented to regulate - not only are we presented with an explanatory framework, provided with a criterion of action - but also

> "a number of ways of thinking and acting crystallise and come together. A man would fight for his life not to be dragged into the fire. No induction, terror. That is, as it were, part of the substance of the belief." (92)

Or again:

> "What is the criterion for meaning something different? Not only what he takes as evidence for it, but also how he reacts, that he is in terror etc..." (93)

I think Wittgenstein is trying to say that unless one experiences the believer's terror, unless one has a similar affective response, unless one has an "extremely passionate belief" (94) in the, e.g., 'Last Judgement', one will, in an important or deep sense, not really understand what the religious believer believes. Wittgenstein seems to be saying here that the unbeliever, who construes religious belief theoretically, does not fully understand the use of the religious picture or pictures. Ultimately, the meaning of religious statements is to be found in one's commitment. Religion can only be understood with passion.

Understanding religion or religious belief is incompatible with scepticism. To say this, however, is simply to claim that, if the atheist does not **share** the beliefs of the believer, the beliefs of the believer do not have the same significance - a psychological matter - for the atheist as they have for the believer. The beliefs, in this sense, may not mean the same to both men. Such a claim, however, does not entitle us to draw the conclusion that the atheist cannot understand the nature and content of the believer's beliefs.

In discussing the criterion, which Wittgenstein postulates, for 'meaning something different', we saw Wittgenstein remark that it 'may not only be how someone reacts, that he is in terror, but also what he takes as 'evidence' for it. Now what does Wittgenstein have to say concerning the criteria of rationality for religious belief claims? Normally we consider a belief rational if it is an evidential belief - a belief for which there is good or adequate evidence. Wittgenstein discusses the question with particular attention to the different kinds of reasons which may be given for religious beliefs, as opposed to factual, scientific beliefs.

Is it the case that the religious believer believes and uses the religious picture , e.g., of the Last Judgement', because he thinks the evidence for such a happening as a Last Judgement well established, while the unbeliever does not? Wittgenstein relates the following.

> "These controversies look quite different from any normal controversies. Reasons look entirely different from normal reasons. They are, in a

way, quite inconclusive. The point is that if there were evidence, this would, in fact, destroy the whole business. Anything that I normally call evidence wouldn't in the slightest influence me. Suppose, for instance, we know people who foresaw the future; make forecasts for years and years ahead; and they described some sort of Judgement Day. Queerly enough, even if there were such a thing, and even if it were more convincing than I have described, belief in this happening wouldn't be at all a religious belief. Suppose that I would have to forego all pleasures because of such a forecast. If I do so and so, someone will put me in fires in a thousand years, etc. I wouldn't budge. The best scientific evidence is just nothing. A religious belief might in fact fly in the face of such a forecast, and say 'No. There it will break down.'" (95)

Furthermore, this religious belief in the 'Last Judgement':

> "must be called the firmest of all beliefs, because the man risks things on account of it which he would not do on things which are by far better established for him." (96)

Not only is this belief, in the 'Last Judgement', the firmest of all beliefs but, further,

> "one talks of believing and at the same time one doesn't use 'believe' as one does ordinarily. You might say (in the normal use): 'You only believe - oh well -' here it is used entirely differently; on the other hand it is not used as we generally use the word 'know'." (97)

> "It is for this reason that different words are used: 'dogma', 'faith'. We don't talk about hypothesis or about high probability." (98)

The emphasis on commitment, and the denial that religious <u>belief</u> is any kind of evidential belief - the evidences produced

guaranteeing the rationality of the belief - is meant to spotlight the contrast between religious belief and scientific belief, religious belief, it is claimed, being radically different from the entertaining of a scientific belief or hypothesis. Could, however, religious people or believers accept this account, given by Wittgenstein, of the non-evidential basis of their faith? Don't they talk of believing because of the evidence of, say, a religious experience, or because of the truth of certain historical facts? To this Wittgenstein retorts:

> "We do talk of evidence, and do talk of evidence by experience. We could even talk of historic events. It has been said that Christianity rests on a historic basis. It has been said a thousand times by intelligent people that indubitability is not enough in this case ... Because the indubitability wouldn't be enough to make me change my whole life. It doesn't rest on an historic basis in the sense that the ordinary belief in historic facts could serve as a foundation - there we have a belief in historic facts different from a belief in ordinary historic facts. Even they are not treated as historical, empirical propositions. Those people who had faith didn't apply the doubt which would ordinarily apply to any historical proposition." (99)

For Wittgenstein, then, historical facts or events cannot serve as any kind of basis, or provide any kind of foundation for religious belief -and this would still be the case even if the events in question were indubitable. No fact or event, no matter how well evidenced or significant, could serve as a foundation of a religious belief, because, even if the events were indubitable, they could not change my whole life as religious

belief does. One immediate retort to this point is that this is simply not true. Events, even a single event, have been known to change completely an individual's fundamental beliefs, attitudes, indeed even his complete life. Perhaps individuals acted wrongly in allowing the course of their lives to be so changed by the passage of events, but, as a mere matter of fact, it is clear that events can and have changed lives. Further, even accepting the Wittgensteinian point here, what do, in particular, Christians mean then when they claim their religion rests on 'an historic basis'? It is of course obvious that they will 'have a belief in historic facts different from a belief in ordinary historic facts', but what is the nature of the belief involved here? This surely requires some specification.

What then are we to say of the rationality of such beliefs, the reasonability of such individuals? To this Wittgenstein replies:

> "Here we have people who treat this evidence in a different way. They base things on evidence (100) which taken in one way would seem exceedingly flimsy. They base enormous things on this evidence. Am I to say they are unreasonable? I wouldn't call them unreasonable. I would say they are certainly not reasonable, that's obvious. 'Unreasonable' implies, with everyone, rebuke. I want to say: they don't treat this as a matter of reasonability. Anyone who reads the Epistles will find it said: not only that it is not reasonable, but that it is folly. Not only is it not reasonable, but it doesn't pretend to be." (101)

(I am no New Testament scholar, but, if my memory serves me right, the Apostle, when he characterised the belief in the Resurrection

as a folly, was simply stating how such a belief appeared to the Greeks in particular, and not suggesting that the belief as such was a folly, or unreasonable.)

Those whom Wittgenstein does consider unreasonable, in a sense implying rebuke, are apologists for, or against, religion who make the 'ludicrous' assumption that religious beliefs can be verified or falsified, by treating them as though they were scientific hypotheses. Referring to an attempt by one, Father O'Hara, (102) to show that religious beliefs can be scientifically proved, he says:

> "I would definitely call O'Hara unreasonable. I would say if this is religious belief, then it's all superstition. But I would ridicule it, not by saying it is based on insufficient evidence. I would say: here is a man who is cheating himself. You can say: This man is ridiculous because he believes, and bases it on weak reasons." (103)

Before making a few critical comments on Wittgenstein's claims, I think it is important to note a certain continuity in Wittgenstein's position here with the account of religious belief given in the Tractatus period. Although the philosophical framework is very different (i.e., his later theory of meaning apparently permits religious propositions intelligibility, significance) the element of continuity arises from his resistance to the claims of science. This resistance to the perspective of religious claims understood as factual claims, factual hypotheses, was a predominant aspect of the Tractarian philosophy and, as noted, it continues in the Investigations period. Religion or religious belief is not embryonic or confused science or scientific belief. Indeed religion and

science are simply different modes of thought. Having thus rejected the claims of science, Wittgenstein is then committed to give an account of religious belief in non-scientistic terms, which he does in both periods of his philosophy. The particular articulation of his thoughts here, which finds expression in the 'Investigations' period, is to, quite simply, point us to the 'religious language game', to the grammar of religious belief as expressed there. There, according to Wittgenstein, displaying the grammar of religious belief involves illustrating that religious beliefs are not factual beliefs nor hypotheses, but regulative pictures which control our thinking, guide our conduct in very different ways - the meaning or significance of a religious proposition not being a function of factual truth conditions, but rather a function of the regulative and affective difference it makes to the lives of those who live by it. Religious beliefs, unlike scientific beliefs, are not hypotheses, are not based on evidence, but find their meaning or significance in the role they play in the believer's life.

What is the difference, then, between the man who believes in the 'Last Judgement' and the man who does not? It is obviously not, as we have seen, a matter of empirical evidence, because even if there were evidence predicting the actual occurrence of a 'Judgement Day', a belief in such a happening wouldn't be a religious belief. Indeed the religious believer may well be aware that evidence is lacking and not, by itself, regard this as a great problem, because the very presence of evidence 'may destroy the whole business'. Thus religious

belief is not mere empirical belief, i.e., a belief in the occurrence of particular events. Now while this last point may well be accepted, must one proceed to claim, as Wittgenstein apparently does, that, not only is religious belief not mere empirical belief, but also (a) no reference to factual beliefs is implied, no factual beliefs entailed, in the statement of a religious belief? Now in discussing Wittgenstein's references to religious belief as using a 'picture', we saw that, for Wittgenstein, (a) the 'whole weight may be in the picture', and (b) this is so, because it is impossible to take a position outside the picture and compare the picture with that pictured - the impossibility here being logical, i.e., it would make no sense to talk or think of doing so. Can one rest content with such an account? Surely if the 'picture' of the Last Judgement is to regulate, have commissive and affective force in a believer's life, this can only happen if, in some sense for the believer, some empirical content is given to the claim that there will be a Last Judgement. The belief in the Last Judgement cannot be simply encapsulated or constituted by the 'picture'.

It is of course true that one cannot compare one's picture of God with God, one's picture of a Last Judgment with the Last Judgment. However, this does not entail that the truth or otherwise of the belief that there is a God or the belief that there will be a Last Judgment is irrelevant to the adequacy or significance of the religious pictures. Certainly it is true that what one can and cannot affirm about God or the Last Judgment is constituted by the rules of usage which determine the use of the pictures in the religious life;

but surely the pictures must be believed to have some extra-mental reality - to have factual implications - for them to play the role they do play in the religious life? As Professor N. Smart states, when discussing the belief in hell, and the affective responses attendant upon such a belief:

> "A sulphurous picture is presented, and connected with specified sorts of sin. A man's belief in this picture is seen in the terror with which he lives, induced in part by his load of guilt. It surely makes a difference if he recognises that from an empirical point of view there is no ground for belief in survival, and that his sufferings will cease with his death. For however much we may want to say that belief in hell is a matter of keeping before one a certain picture, this cannot exclude us from considering questions of survival at the empirical level. The difference that the recognition of his literal non-survival would make is this: that his terror is no longer like that which a person might have if he were told that on a certain date the police would begin to torture him. The latter case of terror is normal, and in a straight forward way rational. But terror at a non-literal hell is transformed into something different: it is a vivid realization, sub specie aeternitatis, of one's guilt, and of one's sense of alienation from God. If a man in these circumstances nevertheless sometimes began to fear hell the way he would fear torture, ought he not to be reassured?" (104)

Similarly, with the notion of a 'Last Judgement', would we not say that someone, who experienced terror at the thought of a non-literal 'Last Judgement', was in a very important sense

deluded?

Further, is it correct to dismiss questions of evidence when the beliefs in question are religious beliefs? Surely the availability or otherwise of evidence for any particular religious belief is of crucial importance in determining the validity of that belief? Indeed, this is a point which many religious believers would themselves accept. Certainly a belief based on evidence, for example a belief in the existence of God, may be inaccurately described as a religious belief. Indeed whether or not one wants to characterise such a belief as a religious belief will depend very much on the kind of features being present which Wittgenstein himself points to: that is, the regulative and affective nature of the belief. But surely any religious belief in the existence of God must presuppose an evidential factual belief if it is to cease being thought of as a mere regulative belief with no empirical or factual consequences. Or again, suppose that by believing religiously in a Last Judgement we are simply to mean that this particular religious belief regulates and controls a person's life in an affective manner. On such a view any particular factual belief in any coming event is religiously irrelevant. The problem then is to see how the religious belief can be anything more than a mere regulative belief involving only the upholding of certain attitudes.

In criticising O'Hara Wittgenstein makes the point that any putative 'defence' of religious claims presented in scientistic terms would be in essence superstition. Now I

suspect that Wittgenstein's characterization of O'Hara's apologetics here as superstition is directed at two points, that O'Hara defends religion in scientistic terms and that such a defence would admit the religious importance of evidential factual beliefs or hypotheses as components of religious belief itself. To admit the religious significance of such beliefs would, I suspect for Wittgenstein, be the quintessence of superstitious belief. Why however should a religious belief in a 'Last Judgement', if it also involves or presupposes an empirical belief that there will be such an event as a Last Judgement, be labelled a superstitious belief? What criteria or criterion could be invoked here to justify such a claim? Surely the life, death and 'resurrection' of Jesus, within traditional Christian theology, are regarded as historical events, as historical facts, as historical empirical propositions - the historical basis on which Christianity rests? The mere fact or facts, as Wittgenstein points out, that religious people may not 'apply the doubt which would ordinarily apply to any historical proposition' (or, in contradistinction, assuming these historic events were well established, 'the indubitability wouldn't be enough to make me change my life') surely is not sufficient to dismiss the question of the empirical truth or falsity of these empirical facts, thought of as providing the historic basis of Christian belief, as superstition?

The weaknesses displayed here show, I think, first of all, just how much emphasis Wittgenstein does place on the regulative and commissive aspect of religious beliefs or pictures and, secondly, what is also displayed is the fundamental inadequacy of such an

account, understood as providing the grammar of religious belief. It is surely only by linking the regulative and commissive force, of such a religious belief as the belief in the Last Judgement, with belief in the occurrence of such an event and, more fundamentally, belief in an independently existing God, that such a belief or picture becomes more than a mere picture or regulative device? Indeed, surely the regulative force of such a 'picture' is, to a large extent, determined by its factual force or character. Biographical considerations cannot provide a proper foundation for, in particular, Christian religious belief.

Finally, what can be said of Wittgenstein's claims concerning the non-reasonability of religious belief claims? I have already commented on Wittgenstein's claim that his description of religious belief as folly has some biblical justification. Furthermore, to characterise religious belief as folly is, in an important sense, to claim that religious belief is unreasonable, and not 'non-rational', as Wittgenstein seems to want to suggest. Let me explore further what Wittgenstein has to say concerning the non-rational nature of religious belief. He states:

> "Whether a thing is a blunder or not - it is a blunder in a particular system. Just as something is a blunder in a particular game and not in another. You could also say that where we are reasonable, they (religious believers) are not reasonable - meaning they don't use reason here. If they do something very like one of our blunders, I would say, I don't know. It depends on further surroundings of it." (105)

And as an example of a 'blunder' which it would be inappropriate to classify as a blunder, Wittgenstein states:

> "If you suddenly wrote numbers down on the blackboard, and then said: "Now, I'm going to add," and then said: "2 and 21 is 13," etc. I'd say: "This is no blunder."" (106)

In such a case, Wittgenstein argues, the mistake would be too gross to be thought of as <u>simply</u> a mistake - one would have to look for some other kind of explanation. And, applying this to the religious case, Wittgenstein appears to be saying that, if religious belief is understood as any kind of scientific belief, it can be classified as a blunder. But whether or not religious belief is any kind of blunder, in this sense, depends on how it is viewed - the surroundings which constitute the framework of the belief. For Wittgenstein, the surroundings are such, in the religious case, as to make him wary of classifying religious belief as any kind of evidential, 'scientific belief'. And one reason for being wary is constituted by, as Wittgenstein sees it, the strange use - or perhaps, one should say, lack of use - of the term 'reason'. Normally one's reason for accepting a particular belief claim is constituted by whatever evidence there is for that particular claim, but in the religious case, the evidence for any particular belief claim is either so totally unconvincing, or lacking - or indeed thought to be irrelevant - that to talk of believing, on the basis of rational considerations, or of having a rational belief, is viewed as inappropriate talk. Thus, one claims one's religious belief is non-rational, and, for Wittgenstein, in this sense, religious belief 'is no blunder'.

Can one, however, sustain the argument that the religious use of the term 'belief' is entirely different from the use of

the term in non-religious contexts? Apart from the considerations presented above, Wittgenstein has already sketched, as we have seen, certain differences between the religious use of the term 'believe' and its use in non-religious contexts. But are his conclusions to be accepted here? Certainly, one can distinguish a religious belief from a non-religious belief, but does this imply that there is a difference in kind between, on the one hand, religious beliefs and, on the other hand, non-religious beliefs? Indeed, doesn't the very possibility of making such a distinction or contrast illustrate that we cannot claim that the uses of the term in a religious and non-religious context are entirely different? Further, despite what Wittgenstein claims, the nature and content of religious beliefs can be changed by developments or progressions in non-religious beliefs. Indeed, one might suspect that the analysis of the nature and content of certain religious beliefs, as presented by Wittgenstein, has been very heavily influenced by certain secular or non-religious beliefs, i.e., in particular, philosophical beliefs as to what is philosophically tenable or acceptable.

Furthermore, and finally, despite Wittgenstein's claim that he is plotting the grammar of <u>religious</u> belief, I suspect that the most fundamental criticism that any Christian religious believer would make is that Wittgenstein has singularly failed to plot what is <u>religiously</u> distinctive about such belief. That is, his analysis fails to recognise what Smart has labelled as the 'bipolar' nature of religious belief. (107) That is, not only is religion linked to moral behaviour, practice and attitudes, as pinpointed by Wittgenstein, but it is also linked to

the "pole of the transcendent". (108) Indeed its linkage to the transcendent, to the belief that there is or exists a God, whom religious pictures are pictures of, is in a sense paramount, because it is such a belief which gives sense and intelligibility to the moral and other practices. Indeed, if one analyses religious belief primarily in terms of its regulative and affective force on one's life, it is difficult to see how the account one is giving of the transcendent language of religion can be anything other than a reductionist account of religious belief and language. Religious belief may involve having certain attitudes to the world and life, and these need not necessarily all be moral attitudes, but it is also much more than simply that - in particular, it involves a belief in an independently existing God.

These points can be made in conclusion. There is nothing particularly novel or unusual in the claims, expressed by Wittgenstein, regarding his analysis of the nature of religious belief. The claim that religious belief ought not to be assimilated to factual belief, that it obtains its unique meaning by the role it plays in a believer's life, is, for the most part, certainly not original. Further, as in the 'Tractatus period,' the influence of Kierkegaard looms large. Compare what we have seen Wittgenstein say, with these sample quotations from Kierkegaard.

> "While objective knowledge rambles comfortably on by the long road of approximation without being impelled by the urge of passion, subjective knowledge counts every delay a deadly peril, and the decision so infinitely important and so

> instantly pressing that it is as if the opportunity had already passed." (109)
>
> "Only in subjectivity is there decisiveness, to seek objectivity is to be in error. It is the passion of the infinite that is the decisive factor, and not its content, for its content is precisely itself." (110)
>
> "Now when the problem is to reckon upon which side there is most truth, whether on the side of one who seeks the true God objectively, and pursues the approximate truth of the God-idea; or on the side of one who, driven by the infinite passion of his need for God, feels an infinite concern for his own relationship to God in truth ... the answer cannot be in doubt for anyone who has not been demoralised with the aid of science." (111)

We have seen that Wittgenstein regarded Kierkegaard highly, held him to be a 'really religious' man, though far 'too deep for him', and further felt himself incapable of receiving from Kierkegaard "the good effects which he would (produce) in deeper souls". (112) He said to Dr Drury that Kierkegaard was "by far the greatest philosopher of the nineteenth century." (113) Perhaps, however, if Wittgenstein had held Kierkegaard in less esteem and reflected more on the teachings of his own later philosophy that words may have a 'family of meanings', (114) we would have been presented with a more balanced and less individualistic account or analysis of the nature of religious belief - an account which would not have concentrated or been centred on one particular, and at that highly disputable, analysis of the nature of religious belief and an account which is thus so individualistic because it does

not reflect and detail the claim that there is not one set of rules of usage of, e.g., the terms 'reason', 'evidence', 'fact', but instead reserves the rules of use for these terms to the 'scientific language game'. (The question of whether there is or is not, a 'family of meanings', more than one set of rules of use of the terms mentioned, I do not at this moment wish to comment on.) I think, however, that reflection along these lines would have been more in keeping with the general tenor and import of his later philosophy and, in particular, the theory of meaning displayed there, although, perhaps, what his later philosophy may or may not dictate, as to what he should say about the nature and analysis of religious belief, is overruled by his own moral or religious ideas as to the nature and content of religious belief.

However, Wittgenstein's analysis of religious belief is at best rather cryptic, inhibited - if not at times contradictory - all of which, I think, reflects the fact that Wittgenstein displayed throughout his philosophical speculations an intense unease and uncertainty when dealing with religious phenomena in general, and religious belief and discourse in particular. However what is distinctive about this 'Investigations phase' of Wittgenstein's philosophy is the apparent implication, or hint, that religion is 'a form of life' (115), constitutes a 'system' (116) within which 'religious language-games' become, in their own way, as verbalisable and as meaningful and even as true or false as any others. (That is, criteria of meaning and truth are internal to the 'language-game'.) However, as already

suggested, it is not altogether clear that Wittgenstein fully accepts this characterization. (117) Religion as the inexpressible, the ineffable, as on the Tractatus model, may still have an appeal. Meanwhile, certain philosphers of religion are more than ready to use Wittgenstein's Investigations' theoretical framework to counter the very possibility of philosophical scepticism with regard to the meaningfulness of religious assertions and/or the possibility of religious knowledge and truth claims. It is to a critical examination of their work that I now wish to turn.

S E C T I O N 2

CHAPTER 1

MALCOLM'S ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The first important and significant work in recent philosophy of religion to incorporate and utilise the 'Wittgensteinian notions' of 'language-game' and 'form of life' was Professor Norman Malcolm's famous article which represented an attempt to revive a 'version' of St. Anselm's Ontological Argument(s). (1) In response to this article there was an impressive body of criticism which concurred in the conclusion that the argument, considered as a proof or demonstration of God's (necessary) existence, fails. My interest in re-examining Malcolm's argument will not be so much to say anything new, either in agreement with or in opposition to this conclusion, but rather (a) to trace what specific role the 'Wittgensteinian notions' play in Malcolm's reformulation of Anselm's argument and (b) to assess the significance of their use.

Professor A. Flew commenting in his recent book God and Philosophy on the use, in Malcolm's argument, of the 'Wittgensteinian notions' of 'language-game' and 'form of life' says:

> "If it really were, as Malcolm apparently thinks, a corollary of the later philosophy of Wittgenstein that the existence of God could be deduced from some alleged facts of verbal usage, this would surely constitute a reduction to absurdity of that philosophy: a conclusion very far indeed from the intention of so devoted a disciple." (2)

Or again, R. E. Allen, commenting critically on the 'Wittgensteinian moves' in Malcolm's reformulated Ontological Argument, claims the following. There is

> "a theme which runs like a thread through the texture of Malcolm's disquisition, the theme that religious language is a type of protected discourse. Malcolm seems to imply that the existence of God cannot be significantly denied, since that denial would constitute a confusion of types of language. It would involve the use of concepts of limited application (specifically, the ordinary concept of existence) in an alien context, it would involve application without meaning. One may choose to play the religious language game or choose not to ... But one cannot meaningfully deny the premise on which that game depends: 'This language game is played.'" (3)

Obviously both these philosophers are highly critical and suspicious of the introduction and use of the 'Wittgensteinian concepts' in Malcolm's reformulated Ontological Argument. The heart of the criticism seems to reside in the claim that Malcolm, by so introducing and using the notions of 'language-game' and 'form of life', is enabled to prove thereby the existence of God. Now I hope to show, by first of all closely examining Malcolm's reformulated Ontological Argument and secondly, plotting the role and use of the 'Wittgensteinian notions', that such a criticism is at first sight unjustifiable, but that at a deeper level of argument - when one plots closely the 'significance' of their use - such criticisms (as displayed above) do make a valid point. However to actually establish my case let me turn first, from these

general comments, to a specific examination of Malcolm's reformulation of Anselm's Ontological Argument as given in Section II of Malcolm's article.

Prior to the presentation of his reformulated version of the Ontological Argument Malcolm, in section I of the article, rejects the 'traditionally recognised' form of the Ontological Argument where it is claimed that, if God is that 'than which nothing greater can be conceived', he must be thought to exist because if he did not exist he would be something less than that 'than which nothing greater can be conceived'. Such an argument, of course, depends for its validity on the contention that existence or to exist is a perfection and thus that 'existence is a real predicate'. Malcolm rejects the claim that 'exists' is a 'real predicate', although admitting that he cannot provide any rigorous refutation of the doctrine, but he is quite content to accept the following Kantian refutation:

> "By whatever and by however many predicates we may think a thing - even if we completely determine it - we do not make the least addition to the thing when we further declare that this thing is. Otherwise, it would not be exactly the same thing that exists, but something more than we had thought in the concept; and we could not, therefore, say that the exact object of my concept exists." (4)

Now, according to Malcolm, not only is Anselm responsible for this invalid form of the Ontological Argument but also for a different and valid form or version of the Ontological Argument, both of which are found in Anselm's Proslogian. (5) The claim that 'existence is a perfection' has been rejected, but Malcolm claims to find in this second and valid version of the

Ontological Argument a very different claim - viz 'the logical impossibility of nonexistence is a perfection'. He expresses the point in the following way:

> "His first ontological proof uses the principle that a thing is greater if it exists than if it does not exist. His second proof employs the different principle that a thing is greater if it necessarily exists than if it does not necessarily exist." (6)

Further, if we accept the claim involved in the second 'proof' - that 'necessary existence' can be predicated of God-we do have a further reason for rejecting the claim that 'existence is a perfection' because such existence would be contingent existence and

> "the notion of contingent existence or of contingent nonexistence cannot have any application to God. His existence must either be logically necessary or logically impossible." (7)

What is also clear is that by <u>necessary</u> existence Malcolm means <u>logically necessary</u> and, while Kant was correct in arguing that contingent existence is not a perfection or a predicate, this is not the case, as Malcolm argues, for <u>necessary existence</u>, which is a predicate, a property and a perfection.

In essence Malcolm believes that what Anselm was trying to accomplish is the following. The proof is an attempt to deduce God's <u>necessary</u> existence from our conception of Him as a 'being than which none greater can be conceived'- the 'most adequate object of worship'- by showing that His existence must be either <u>logically necessary</u> or <u>logically impossible</u>. Malcolm's summary of what he considers Anselm's modal argument

to be, as stated in Proslogian 3, is as follows:

> "(1) If God, a being a greater than which cannot be conceived, does not exist then he cannot come into existence. For if he did, he would either have been caused to come into existence or have happened to come into existence, and in either case he would be a limited being, which by our conception of him he is not. Since he cannot come into existence, if he does not exist, his existence is impossible.
> (2) If he does exist, he cannot have come into existence (for the reason given), nor can he cease to exist, for nothing could cause him to cease to exist nor could it just happen that he ceased to exist. So if God exists, his existence is necessary.
> (3) Thus God's existence is either impossible or necessary.
> (4) It can be the former (i.e. God's existence can be impossible) only if the concept of such a being is self contradictory or in some way logically absurd.
> (5) Assuming that this is not so (i.e. assuming that our notion of God is logically coherent),
> (6) it follows that God necessarily exists." (8)

Necessary existence must then be predicated of God, not existence (contingent existence). Further, this assertion must not be interpreted in such a way that someone, while agreeing that perhaps nothing could prevent God's existence, still might claim that it might just happen that God does not exist. As Malcolm expresses the point in his article:

> "from the supposition that it would happen that God did not exist it would follow that, if he existed, he would have mere duration and not eternity. It would make sense to ask "How long

> has he existed?", "Will he still exist next week?", "He was in existence yesterday but how about to-day?", and so on. It seems absurd to make God the subject of such questions. According to our ordinary conception of him, he is an eternal being. And eternity does not mean endless duration, as Spinoza noted. To ascribe eternity to something is to exclude as senseless all sentences that imply that it has duration." (9)

Necessary existence, he says later,

> "is a property of God in the same sense that necessary omnipotence and necessary omniscience are his properties ... The a priori proposition 'God necessarily exists' entails the proposition 'God exists', if and only if the latter also is understood as an a priori proposition; in which case the two propositions are equivalent. In this sense Anselm's proof is a proof of God's existence." (10)

This is Malcolm's reformulation of what he considers to be the valid version or form of Anselm's Ontological Argument and it is to the above reasoning, as particularly instanced in Malcolm's summary of the proof, that criticisms of the proof have been directed. (11) But note, there has been no mention of, or no use of, the 'Wittgensteinian notions' of 'language-game' or 'form of life'. This does not give any support to Flew's claim that it is a 'corollary of the later philosophy of Wittgenstein that the existence of God is deduced merely from some alleged facts of verbal usage'. Where then do the 'Wittgensteinian notions' enter? To see the role which the 'Wittgensteinian notions' do play we must, first of all, look back at Malcolm's summary of the proof.

There we saw (premises three and four) that God's existence is either necessary or impossible, and it is the latter only if 'the concept of such a being is self-contradictory or in some way logically absurd'. However, assuming (premise five) that our concept of God is logically coherent, it follows that 'God necessarily exists' (conclusion). Thus Malcolm's reformulation of Anselm's Ontological Argument is of the following form. Assuming that the concept of God is logically coherent, it follows that God necessarily exists. As Malcolm states:

> "the only intelligible way of rejecting Anselm's claim that God's existence is necessary is to maintain that the concept of God, as a being a greater than which cannot be conceived, is self-contradictory or nonsensical. Supposing that this is false, Anselm is right to deduce God's necessary existence from his characterization of him as a being a greater than which cannot be conceived." (12)

Now it is precisely this step that certain philosophers have taken in trying to refute the Ontological Argument. They have tried to show that the concept of such a being, as presupposed in the argument, is logically incoherent; that the concept of God, a being a 'greater than which cannot be conceived', understood, in particular, as the concept of a 'logically necessary being', is self-contradictory. This is claimed to be the case because it is believed only propositions can be necessary and if, to accommodate this point for 'logically necessary being', one writes "'God exists' is a logically necessary proposition", this still will not suffice because it is claimed no existential proposition can be logically necessary.

All existential propositions are contingent and logical necessity merely reflects particular linguistic conventions. Thus a 'logically necessary being' is a contradiction in terms. Professor J. N. Findlay is one philosopher who, at one time, believed this point to be true and indeed in his article 'Can God's existence be Disproved' (13) claims, although in initial agreement with Malcolm as to what would or should constitute the idea of a being 'a greater than which cannot be conceived' - the idea of an adequate object of worship - to provide an Ontological Disproof of God's existence for the reasons given above. Briefly, Findlay's argument goes something like this:

(1) If 'God is to be the adequate object of our religious attitudes', if 'God is to satisfy religious claims and needs, he must be a being in every way inescapable, One whose existence we cannot possibly conceive away ' because he possesses his qualities in 'some necessary manner.' 'Necessary existence must be part of God's nature.'

(2) On 'a modern view of the matter, necessity in propositions merely reflects our use of words, the arbitrary conventions of our language.' There are no 'necessary facts of existence.'

(3) This being so, this 'modern' view of necessity makes it 'self-evidently absurd to speak of such a Being and attribute existence to him.' It 'entails its necessary non-existence or non-significance.' (14)

Malcolm believes this conclusion does not follow and I shall summarise his argument in the following way:

(1) God's existence is not impossible or self-contradictory. 'But I do not know how to demonstrate that the concept of

God is not self-contradictory. That is I do not understand what it would mean to demonstrate in general, and not in respect to any particular reasoning, that the concept is not self-contradictory.' However, 'I should think there is no more of a presumption that it is self-contradictory than is the concept of seeing a material thing. Both concepts have a place in the thinking and the lives of human beings.' (15)

(2) Thus, while I accept Findlay's premise (1) and indeed his premise (2), ('I am inclined to hold the 'modern' view that logically necessary truth 'merely reflects our use of words'') I am 'unable to see how that view is supposed to lead to the conclusion that 'the Divine existence is either senseless or impossible'.' (16)

(3) Because given that the concept of God, the concept of a Necessary Being, does play a role, have a place in the thinking and the lives of human beings, we should 'look at the use of words and not manufacture a priori theses about it,' 'the view that logical necessity merely reflects the use of words cannot possibly have the implication that every existential proposition must be contingent.' (17)

(4) And indeed when we look at the religious literature, in particular the 'Ninetieth Psalm we find it said: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or even Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." Here is expressed the idea of the necessary existence and eternity of God, an idea that is essential to the Jewish and Christian religions. In these complex systems of thought, these "language-games", God has the status of a

necessary being. Who can doubt that? Here we must say with Wittgenstein, "This language-game is played!"' (18)

Thus Findlay's claim is rebutted, argues Malcolm, because

> "we may rightly take the existence of these religious systems of thought in which God figures as a necessary being to be a disproof of the dogma, affirmed by Hume and others, that no existential proposition can be necessary." (19)

This is where Malcolm's 'Wittgensteinian move' is introduced. It does not appear in the formulation of his version of Anselm's Ontological Argument, nor does it function as any kind of 'proof of God's existence'. Rather, its function is to combat the claim that the very concept of a logically necessary being is a contradiction in terms, it being argued that the coherence of a concept is assured by its use in a well-founded language-game. (20) The conclusion of Malcolm's version of Anselm's Ontological Argument was: Provided that the concept of God is coherent, assuming that this is so, it follows that God necessarily exists. In claiming that the logical coherence or soundness of the concept of God is assured by its having a role, a use, in a well-founded 'language-game', Malcolm is not thereby proving the existence of God. That he thinks has already been accomplished by his reformulation of Anselm's argument.

Before proceeding to assess the full implications of the 'Wittgensteinian move' on Malcolm's part, I want to pause to consider these two issues. First of all, has Malcolm accurately and adequately characterised the 'religious language-game' in his above remarks? Has he, in fact, correctly characterised

the idea of God as the idea of a logically necessary Being - an idea 'essential to the Jewish and Christian religion'? Secondly, assuming that he has, may we not then be faced once again, in a different way, with doubts as to the logical coherence of the concept so characterised. I want to assess the nature of these doubts or difficulties and in so doing we will, once again, be led back to discussing the 'Wittgensteinian move' in Malcolm's argument and I intend, at this stage, to study the full implications of its use and its general relationship to the reformulated Ontological Argument as such.

First of all then, has Malcolm accurately and adequately characterised the 'religious language-game'? In citing the Ninetieth Psalm as evidence Malcolm was hoping to provide some biblical justification for his claim that God is thought of as existing in a logically necessary manner. Let us look again at the passage cited. 'Before the mountains were brought forth, or even Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.' All that is said here is that God is everlasting, not that he is a logically necessary being and surely to say of a being that he is everlasting is simply to say that he has endless existence or duration? However, if we reflect back on Malcolm's comments, which I quoted at the conclusion of the summary of his revised Anselmian argument, we shall remember that, for Malcolm, there is a crucial distinction to be made between what is involved in merely enduring - having 'mere duration' - and existing eternally. Indeed we were there referred to Spinoza who, we were told, noted that 'eternity does not mean endless duration'. Thus it is by understanding what it is for God to

exist in an everlasting manner as essentially involving the claim that God is eternal - to ascribe eternity to God 'is to exclude as senseless all sentences that imply that he has duration' - that Malcolm believes the reference in the Bible to God's everlasting existence should be understood. And of course, for Malcolm, to describe God as a necessary being, as a necessary existent, is to claim that God is eternal. Thus, in summary, Malcolm takes the Biblical passage as supporting his claim that God must be thought of as a logically necessary Being by making two suppositions. Firstly, God's everlasting existence is understood as His eternality; secondly, God's eternality is understood as His necessary existence.

Surely, however, when one looks at the context of the Biblical passage in which the phrase 'from everlasting to everlasting' occurs and especially when one notices references, in particular, to the 'formation of the earth' - the creation of the world - it does seem rather quixotic to maintain that God's existence is understood there as durationless, timeless especially when God is said to have existed 'before' the creation of the world. There does seem to be absolutely no warrant for claiming that the psalmist meant eternity (in the sense ascribed to it by Malcolm) as opposed to endless duration by the phrase 'from everlasting to everlasting'. As N. Pike claims with reference to Malcolm's biblical example here:

> "I think it is instructive to note that this is the biblical passage singled out by Malcolm when attempting to support the idea that God is timeless. One must suspect that scriptural passages conveying this idea are not easy to find." (21)

Thus, I would claim, because it says in the Psalm 'even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God', Malcolm can in no way justify his claim that this means that 'God exists' is a necessarily true proposition - that God is thought of as a logically necessary Being.

However, let us assume that Malcolm has correctly characterised an idea here 'essential to the Jewish and Christian religions', can the resultant concept be employed in anything like the normal ways or manner in which the concept is deployed within traditional Christian belief? That is, can the concept of an eternal (i.e. timeless), omnipotent, omniscient, creator God function in the way and manner it is supposed to within traditional Christian belief? Could it indeed have any application at all? Let us look specifically at the problem of what it could mean to say that a God who is timeless creates the world. I concentrate on the notion of creation in particular because the idea of God as creator is referred to in the passage quoted from the Ninetieth Psalm. Would the concept of a God who is eternal (i.e. timeless) and yet creator of all there is be an intelligible conception?

Now obviously if there is no world but only God, and God is essentially timeless, the concept of time would have no application. What it is to exist in time - to have duration - could only apply to the world itself or events and things in the world. But given this characterization what could it mean to say that God created the world? The immediate image one has here is of a certain situation pertaining before the creation of the world - or to be more accurate of nothing existing but God - and of a very different situation obtaining after the act

of creation; the world existing as well as God and being caused to exist by God's creative power. But if God is thought of as essentially timeless can we apply such temporal predicates as 'before' and 'after' to his act of creation? Indeed, more fundamentally, what could it mean to say that a timeless God creates? God cannot be said to exist before the creation of the world because that would suggest that God is in a temporal position relative to the world, i.e. he antedates it. Equally, the world cannot be said to exist after God's act of creation because that too would temporally place the world in relation to God. Surely too, if one is going to talk of creation or an act of creation one is essentially talking of a causal relationship, a relationship in which the cause precedes the effect in time. Since, however, God is understood as essentially timeless, no temporal relationship between God and the world can be given any content, can even be described. Thus it would seem no sense can be given to the claim that an eternal God, understood as timeless, created or creates the world. The concept of God, understood as the concept of an eternal (timeless) creator, is an incoherent concept. (22)

Faced with such a claim, what would Malcolm's likely reply be? Perhaps, if I expand a little more fully a quotation I have already given from Malcolm's article, we may see just what he is likely to say in reply. Malcolm states:

> "I do not know how to demonstrate that the concept of God ... is not self contradictory. But I do not think that it is legitimate to demand such a demonstration. I also do not know how to demonstrate that either the concept of a material thing or the concept of seeing a

material thing is not self contradictory, and philosophers have argued that both of them are. With respect to any particular reasoning that is offered for holding that the concept of seeing a material thing, for example, is self contradictory, one may try to show the invalidity of the reasoning and thus free the concept from the charge of being self contradictory on that ground. But I do not understand what it would mean to demonstrate in general, and not in respect to any particular reasoning, that the concept is not self contradictory. So it is with the concept of God. I should think there is no more of a presumption that it is self-contradictory than is the concept of seeing a material thing. Both concepts have a place in the thinking and the lives of human beings." (23)

Now given our knowledge of how Malcolm dismissed the claim that the concept of a logically necessary Being is a contradiction in terms - by pointing to its alleged use in a language (religious language)-I think it is not difficult to see how Malcolm would deal with the present alleged incoherence in the concept of God. (Though I think it should be noted when Malcolm claims, in the above quotation, that he would not 'know what it would mean to demonstrate in general' as opposed to providing particular refutations of particular arguments or reasonings concerning the alleged incoherency of the concept of God, that such a claim is rather misleading. What particular considerations did Malcolm present to illustrate that the concept of a logically necessary Being is not an incoherent concept? Rather, the procedure is a general one.) One simply points to the use of the concept in a language-game, a language game which constitutes its 'home base', and it is from such use

that we can be assured that the concept is coherent. Thus such religious sentences, as 'God created heaven and earth and all that in them is,' 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth' by their very use in 'religious language-games' will show that the concept of an eternal (timeless) creator is not an incoherent notion.

Further confirmation, if further confirmation be needed, that this is the kind of move Malcolm would make, can be found in Malcolm's critical review of A. White's study of G. E. Moore. (24) However, as we shall see, what we are provided with is not merely further confirmation of the kind of move Malcolm would deploy but also a further extension of his argument. In the review in question he is discussing the kind of reply which could or should be made if it is claimed that the concept of seeing a material thing is self-contradictory. (We have just seen, in the long passage quoted from Malcolm, that Malcolm treats both this claim and the claim concerning the incoherence of the concept of God together, and one would suspect that the form of the arguments deployed to illustrate the coherence of the concept of seeing a material thing would equally well apply to the 'God' case.) To the claim, then, that the concept of seeing a material thing is self-contradictory, Malcolm replies in the following way:

> "... to understand that this claim is mistaken it is sufficient to realise that these sentences (examples of the kind of sentences Malcolm has in mind are: 'I know that that thing sticking up in the garden is a shovel', 'I see your glasses under the bed') do have a correct use in ordinary discourse, which they could not have if they were self-contradictory."

And, he continues, such sentences "can be correctly used to make a true statement." (25)

Just as the correct use of the, e.g., sentence, 'I see your glasses under the bed', can be taken as a refutation of the claim that the concept of seeing a material thing is self-contradictory so, by parity of reasoning, correct use of the sentence, 'In the beginning God created heaven and earth', can also be taken as a refutation of the claim that the concept of an eternal (timeless) creator is incoherent. Both sentences have uses in 'established language-games'. All this we have already seen Malcolm claim, but he is wanting, I have suggested, to extend the argument here. Not only do such sentences 'have a correct use', but further such sentences 'can be correctly used to make a <u>true</u> statement'. Indeed, I think, he wishes to claim that the possibility of such sentences making a true statement is a criterion of their correct use. Their possibility of making a true statement constitutes their correct use. Thus to apply this development of his argument against the claim that the concept of, e.g., an eternal (timeless) creator is incoherent would be to claim something like the following. Not only is it the case that certain sentences which employ the word 'creator', or more generally the word 'God', have a use in established religious language-games but, further, what is meant by saying such sentences have a use is that such sentences, when correctly deployed, used, <u>can</u> make true statements.

Now this is obviously a much stronger claim than anything Malcolm has hitherto presented us with. One may be reasonably unsympathetic to the claim that established use in a 'language-game' guarantees the coherence of any concept in that

'language-game' (and particularly so in the case of religious concepts) and one may feel that Malcolm should, rather than generally present mere use in the 'language-game' as a guarantee of coherence, be prepared to argue the case with 'respect to the particular reasoning' presented arguing for the incoherence of the concept involved. At the very least, however, one may feel that Malcolm has made a point that established use of a concept in a 'language-game' should make us especially careful and particular in our argumentation before dismissing such a concept as incoherent. But when Malcolm proceeds to claim that by correct use he means 'can be used to make true statements' then, I think, one naturally feels that Malcolm is claiming much too much, at any rate especially in the case of religious concepts and beliefs. Because it is just in this area where questions of truth and falsity are so difficult, where questions of the coherency of the concepts involved do most often arise. Perhaps, however, Malcolm is arguing we are misled into thinking things are difficult here, but I do think we would need much more argumentation, than Malcolm has presented us with, to dissolve our worries here - to assure us that there are no more problems with the concept of God than with the concept of seeing a material thing. What one may accept as a salutary warning against too quick dismissal of a concept as incoherent - its use in an 'established language-game' - becomes, however, entirely unacceptable if the warning is transformed into the claim that by its use in a 'language-game' one means its function of possibly being used to make true statements.

However, leaving aside the question of the adequacy or otherwise of Malcolm's claims concerning what assures the

coherency of a concept, Malcolm is surely going to be placed in an untenable position with regard to his revised Anselmian Ontological Argument if he takes seriously his own argumentation here? As we saw, the Ontological Argument, as stated by Malcolm, was of the form: Provided that, assuming that, the concept of God is coherent, God necessarily exists. However, if to illustrate the coherence of the concept of God all one has to show is not only that a sentence, which employs the word 'God', has a correct use in the language but also can be 'correctly used to make a true statement', then it would seem, one is not merely illustrating the coherence of the concept but claiming that the concept is instantiated in reality. To claim that such sentences, which have 'God' as their subject matter, can be used to make true statements is, it would appear, to claim that God exists. Surely if in demonstrating the coherency of the concept of God one's argument, to this end, involves the assumption of God's existence, this will negate the importance of, make redundant, the original Ontological Argument? To see that the concept is coherent is to see that God exists. That is, once again, given that Malcolm's revised Anselmian argument is of the form - provided the concept of God is coherent, God necessarily exists - it would appear that, if the demonstration of the coherence of the concept of God necessarily involves an affirmation of God's existence, this fact would render Malcolm's revised Anselmian argument redundant or superfluous. Both 'arguments', i.e., (a) Malcolm's revised Ontological Argument and (b) the 'argument' involved in the 'this language-game is played' move, it would appear, have the same conclusion - that God exists. Argument (b), however, must be considered primary because argument

(a) is notacomplete argument and is only acceptable on the basis of a valid argument (b). The validity of argument (b) has, however, the important consequence that it too involves the same conclusion as argument (a) - that God exists. And it is for this reason that I want to claim Malcolm's revised Anselmian Ontological Argument is rendered redundant or superfluous.

Then, just as Malcolm claims to have discovered 'two distinct arguments' in Anselm's writings so it would also appear there are 'two distinct arguments' in Malcolm's article as well. One argument, of a traditional form, spotlights the distinctive features or characteristics peculiar to the concept of God and argues that such features necessitate the instantiation of the concept in reality. The other argument does not claim that there are any such distinctive features or characteristics peculiar to the concept of God, but rather plots the role and function of the concept within 'religious language-games' and 'forms of life' and draws its conclusion from this examination. The validity of the 'first argument' is dependent on whether or not the distinctive features or characteristics peculiar to the concept of God have been (a) plotted correctly and (b), if so, the implications which it is claimed do follow, do actually follow. The validity of the 'second argument' is dependent on our interpretation of and our acceptance or otherwise of certain Wittgensteinian 'insights' - the primacy in both an ontological and epistemological sense of 'language-games' and 'forms of life'. Finally, accepting that I have plotted correctly the significance of the 'this language-game is played' move by Malcolm, perhaps we can now sympathise with Professor Flew's reaction to the alleged 'Wittgensteinian moves' in

Malcolm's article (shared in common with R. C. Allen)-although we may disagree with the particular expression of his reaction - that Malcolm is claiming that 'the existence of God can be deduced merely from some alleged facts of verbal usage'. Certainly it is at least true that, now that we have plotted the role of the 'Wittgensteinian moves' in Malcolm's arguments, before we could hope to adequately assess the validity of such 'moves' we would require more than the mere hint or suggestion of argument that Malcolm has presented us with.

What is, however, involved, for the religious believer, in participating in 'religious language-games' and 'forms of life', uttering religious assertions about God, assertions which can be used to make true statements? Malcolm at the conclusion of his article feels constrained to give some account of the 'human phenomena' which 'compel' individuals to participate in the 'religious forms of life', play the 'religious language-games'. That is, he wishes to examine what is involved in understanding religious concepts, finding them meaningful, participating in the 'religious language-games' and affirming religious beliefs or claims as true. Such an analysis requires an examination of the 'human phenomena', the 'forms of life' in which 'religious language-games' have their life and sustenance.

For Malcolm this problem crystallises itself into an attempt to give an account of how and why the concept of God - the concept of a 'being a greater than which cannot be conceived' - has "meaning for anyone. Why is it that human beings have even formed the concept of an infinite being, a being a greater than which cannot be conceived?" (26) That is, in the absence

of any direct or indirect reference to the world - which is ruled out in the 'ontological approach' - why have human beings formed the concept of God? What is the genesis of the concept of God? For Malcolm there can be no "deep understanding of that concept (God) without an understanding of the phenomena of human life that gives rise to it." (27) Malcolm feels unable to give a complete account of the human phenomena but he is willing to hazard a suggestion. This suggestion is:

> "There is the phenomenon of feeling guilty for something that one has done or thought or felt or for a disposition that one has. One wants to be free of this guilt. But sometimes the guilt is felt to be so great that one is sure that nothing one could do oneself, nor any forgiveness by another human being, would remove it. One feels a guilt that is beyond all measure, a guilt 'a greater than which cannot be conceived'. Paradoxically, it would seem, one nevertheless has an intense desire to have this incomparable guilt removed. One requires a forgiveness that is beyond all measure, a forgiveness 'a greater than which cannot be conceived'. Out of such a storm in the soul, I am suggesting, there arises the conception of a forgiving mercy that is limitless, beyond all measure. This is one important feature of the Jewish and Christian conception of God ... There is that human phenomenon of an unbearably heavy conscience and ... it is importantly connected with the genesis of the concept of God, that is, with the formation of the 'grammar' of the word 'God'." (28)

Two points require to be made here. First of all, Malcolm informs us that with the help of his example he is trying to plot the 'formation of the 'grammar' of the word 'God'' -

display how the word 'God' can have any meaning for anyone. Indeed he later proceeds to inform us that it is only by plotting the human phenomena which underpin the concept of God that one can "grasp the sense of the concept." (29) Now Malcolm could be claiming one of two things here. Either, (a) he is claiming that the information which he is imparting is information concerning the genesis of the meaning of the word 'God', what it is for the word 'God' to have meaning, and /the fact that he tells us that he is discussing 'the formation of the 'grammar' of the word 'God'' would tend to support the view that this is what he believes himself to be doing. Or, (b) he is claiming that the example used, and the human phenomena referred to, help to illustrate why the concept has ever been meaningful to anyone - why it has been thought significant or to have a point. The distinction made here is an important one, i.e. what is the meaning of the word 'God' as opposed to what is involved in the word 'God' having significance or a point - being meaningful in this sense to a believer. It is the difference between asking what the meaning of the particular English word 'God' is, as opposed to posing questions concerning the significance, point or purpose of its use to religious believers. I think that if the distinction made here is kept in mind it can be usefully employed to help explicate certain crucial points or claims which Malcolm will later make.

Secondly, it seems to me that just as Malcolm's elucidation of the Ninetieth Psalm does not justify him in concluding that the Bible contains the idea of God as a logically necessary Being, so, here too, I doubt whether the fact that a person experiences infinite guilt offers any ground for belief that it can be alleviated by

an infinite forgiving mercy - 'a greater than which cannot be conceived'. First of all, the initial experience, the guilt, is if anything a moral experience with no necessary connections to religious ideas or concepts. Secondly, as C. Lyas has pointed out, Malcolm has not established - even if we allow him the connection between the experience of guilt and the genesis of the concept of the greatest possible being - that such a being should be thought of as a necessary being. "Such a being might be required to annihilate himself in order to relieve this guilt." (30)

However this last point need not worry Malcolm too much for, as he states:

> "I am sure that this concept is related to human experience in other ways. If one had the acuteness and depth to perceive these connections, one could grasp the sense of the concept." (31)

Nor is this all Malcolm wishes to say because he wants to relate these thoughts to a remark made by Kierkegaard. Not only is the sense of the concept discovered in its relation to human experience, to its grounding in the 'form of life' where the concept was formed, where it has its genesis, but also, Malcolm claims, quoting approvingly from Kierkegaard:

> "There is only one proof of the truth of Christianity and that, quite rightly, is from the emotions, when the dread of sin and a heavy conscience torture a man into crossing the narrow line between despair bordering upon madness - and Christendom." (32)

Or, as he might equally well have said, again with reference to Kierkegaard:

> "It is subjectivity that Christianity is concerned with, and it is only in subjectivity that its truth exists, if it exists at all." (33)

What are we to make of this argumentation? Clearly Malcolm's purpose is to relate the concept of God to 'the religious language-games', the 'religious forms of life', the 'human phenomena' that give rise to it, to its genesis in the emotions and needs of man. The suggestion seems to be that unless one understands these human experiences and phenomena that give rise to the idea of God, see how these phenomena are related to the genesis of the concept of God, one will, in an important way, be ignorant of the sense of the concept. Furthermore, not only is the sense of the concept discovered in these experiences but also religious truth is a function of these emotions or experiences.

Now there is a fallacy, recognised in philosophy, called the Genetic Fallacy and one is guilty of committing the Genetic Fallacy if one confuses or confounds <u>psychological</u> questions about the origin and genesis of beliefs with <u>logical</u> questions about their truth and grounds. The warning provided by the Genetic Fallacy is that we must distinguish questions about the evidences for particular beliefs, or about their truth or falsity, from questions about their psychological origins or causes. Now one common complaint often laid at the door of many critics of religion is that they commit the Genetic Fallacy by assessing the truth or falsity of particular religious beliefs in terms of their alleged psychological origins. That is, they consider an account of the particular origins of a belief as providing answers to the logical questions of the truth or

falsity of such beliefs. Note, however, what Malcolm's position is here. In the case of religious beliefs - although he only mentions Christianity he does say his point has a wider application - no such distinction as maintained in the statement of the Genetic Fallacy can be justified. That is, one cannot, with reference to religious beliefs, distinguish between questions of the psychological origin(s) of the belief and logical questions of the truth or falsity of the belief. That is, the mistake of those critics of religion, who in the past have been accused of committing the Genetic Fallacy, is not to be found in their method of procedure but rather in the fact that they found religious beliefs to be in some sense false or spurious. In the religious situation, for Malcolm, it is only with reference to the phenomena of the emotions - the human psychological phenomena that generate the concept of God, that form the concept - that one can apply the predicate true. The truth of a religious belief is of and 'from the emotions'. Biographical considerations then do not only guarantee the sense of the concept of God but also constitute what it means to affirm religious beliefs as true. 'The proof of the truth ... is from the emotions.' Given this account, it may not be so much the case that, as Professor Flew argues, 'the existence of God is deduced from some alleged facts of linguistic usage' but rather the 'proof of the truth of Christianity' has its foundation in emotional needs and desires.

Presented, then, with this analysis of the 'religious form of life', the 'religious language-games' and experiences in which the concept of God has its genesis -biographical considerations providing a sufficient ground for adhering to

religious beliefs as true -what possible relationship could the Anselmian Ontological Argument, as first explicated by Malcolm, have to such religious belief? How could such an argument be connected with and to religious belief? Malcolm writes:

> "At a deeper level, I suspect that the argument can be thoroughly understood only by one who has a view of that human 'form of life' that gives rise to the idea of an infinitely great being, who views it from the inside, not just from the outside, and who has, therefore, at least some inclination to partake in that religious 'form of life'. This inclination in Kierkegaard's words is 'from the emotions'. This inclination can hardly be an effect of Anselm's argument, but is rather presupposed in the fullest understanding of it." (34)

To the extent of course that one is a participant in the religious 'form of life', viewing 'things' from the inside, the impetus being provided by the emotions, it is hardly likely that a "piece of logic" which can be "followed deductively" would be of any religious or other significance. (35) To such a person the Anselmian Ontological Argument would be superfluous or redundant.

However, Malcolm asks us to consider another case. He states:

> "I can imagine an atheist going through the argument, becoming convinced of its validity, acutely defending it against objections, yet remaining an atheist. The only effect it could have on the fool of the Psalm would be that he stopped saying in his heart 'There is no God', because he would now realise that this is something he cannot meaningfully say or think. It

> is hardly to be expected that a demonstrative argument should, in addition, produce in him a living faith." (36)

Malcolm's atheist would I suppose 'believe that' there is a God, but, in Malcolm's terminology, remain an 'atheist' in as much as his affirmation of God's existence does not encourage him or, if you like, convert him, into participating in the religious 'form of life'. He would not be a committed believer, his belief would have no emotional backing - he would not 'believe in' God if this is understood to mean participating in the religious 'form of life'.

Now apart from noting the Pickwickian sense of the term 'atheist' employed here, I think the following point should be stressed. Earlier I distinguished between (a) what it is for a word to have a meaning and (b) what is involved in its use being significant, meaningful, having a purpose or point for anyone. Now obviously, given the account Malcolm presents us with above, when Malcolm talks about the 'sense' or 'meaning' of the concept, 'the grammar of the word 'God'', being discovered in the human phenomena, the emotional experiences underpinning the use of the word, he must be talking about what constitutes the significance or point of using the word - what constitutes the word being found meaningful by a believer. If you want to find the significance of its use you must relate it to the human phenomena and experiences where it has its genesis. For Malcolm's 'atheist' such phenomena have, by definition, no significance. The sense or meaning which such phenomena provide for the concept are closed to him. However he can and may still affirm God's existence, the words have a meaning for him. He

may not find them significant, see the point or purpose of affirming the existence of God - he does not participate in the 'religious form of life'-but he can still intelligibly affirm 'There is a God'. The words have a meaning for him, he can be said to 'believe that' there is a God.

Interestingly Malcolm, in a later article (37), rejects the analysis of the situation presented here, rejects his account of what is involved in plotting the grammar of the word 'God' by reference to the human phenomena underpinning it, and maintains that it is not psychologically but logically impossible to believe that God exists and have no - what he now calls - 'affective attitude' towards Him. He states:

> "I must confess that the supposed belief that God exists strikes me as a problematic concept, whereas belief in God is not problematic ... the inclination we are discussing is to hold that you could believe that God exists without believing in God. As I understand it, we are supposed to think that one could believe that God exists but at the same time have no affective attitude towards God. The belief that he exists would come first and the affective attitude might or might not come later. The belief that he exists would not logically imply any affective attitude towards him, but an affective attitude towards him would logically imply the belief that he exists. If we are assuming a Jewish or Christian conception of God I do not see how one can make the above separation. If one conceived of God as the almighty creator of the world and judge of mankind how could one believe that he exists, but not be touched at all by awe or dismay or fear? I am discussing logic, not psychology. Would a belief that he exists, if

> it were completely non-affective really be a belief that he exists? ... Would it be anything at all? What is the 'form of life' into which it would enter?" (38)

Now, not only here do we have stated the rejection of the very intelligibility of a 'belief <u>that</u>' God exists but we also have a positive assertion concerning the intelligibility of 'belief <u>in</u>' God as the only possible expression or affirmation of belief in the 'Jewish and Christian religion'. 'Belief in' God, for Malcolm, "encompasses not only trust but also awe, dread, dismay etc. ... it involves some affective state or attitudes." (39)

Thus Malcolm's 'atheist', the man who cannot say 'in his heart' 'There is no God', but who has no 'living faith', is ruled out of court. Affirmations of God's existence are only intelligible when expressed from within a 'form of life'. It does not make sense to speak of a 'belief <u>that</u> God exists' - 'belief <u>that</u>', where the object of belief is God, makes no sense. Now reflect back, once again, to the distinction I made between the two senses of meaning. In the case of the points made in the context of the Ontological Argument article it seemed obvious that what Malcolm meant by plotting the 'sense of the concept of God', the grammar of the word 'God' -by reference to its genesis in the 'human phenomena' and experiences -was plotting the significance, the point, the meaning<u>fulness</u> in this sense, of the concept to the believer. Confirmation of this interpretation was of course provided by what Malcolm claimed concerning his 'atheist'. The 'atheist' believed that there was a God, the words expressing the belief had a meaning, but the significance, the meaning<u>fulness</u> of the belief, in the other sense, was closed to him. <u>Now</u>, however, we find that the position of such a

Malcolmian 'atheist' is an untenable one. A completely non-affective belief that God exists is, in effect, not a belief that God exists for it makes no sense to say that one believes that God exists but not be touched by awe, fear, dismay, etc. Such a belief is unintelligible because it has misplotted the grammar of the word 'God'. The 'sense of the concept', the grammar of the meaning of the term 'God', can only be discovered by plotting its use in the human phenomena, the human experiences where the concept has its genesis. This is not a point about what is involved in finding religious beliefs and concepts meaningful or significant but rather a point about what is involved in understanding the meaning of the word 'God'; a shift, a change in the argument has occurred. A term, a concept cannot be a shared term or concept unless there is agreement about its criteria of application. Insofar as a committed believer and a notional believer (someone who merely believes that God exists with no affective response present) treat their beliefs in different ways they cannot be said to share the same concepts. In an important sense, if the sense of the concept, the grammar of the word 'God' is only given within the context of the human phenomena and experiences which constitute the 'religious form of life', then only religious believers can significantly employ God-talk - talk to or of God. To maintain, as Malcolm's atheist of the earlier article would, 'I believe that God exists', would be to express a meaningless utterance. Thus, Malcolm's argument here is better understood if we realise that it is by reference to the circumstances and phenomena . understood as necessary for the word 'God' to have a meaning that he is enabled to rule out a 'belief that' God exists as unintelligible. A

point divorced from and separate from the question of what is involved in finding belief in God significant or meaningful.

Two points require to be made here. First of all, Malcolm's claim, in his later article, 'Is it a Religious Belief that God exists?', that 'belief that God exists' is a problematic concept has puzzled many writers. Now it seems to me that if what Malcolm says in this article is read along with his account, in the Ontological Argument article, of the human phenomena and experiences which constitute the 'religious form of life' – phenomena and experiences which are connected with the formation of the sense of the concept of God, with the 'grammar' of the word 'God' – one can at least see certain of the considerations which undoubtedly enticed Malcolm to maintain, what he did maintain, in the later article. That is, the genesis of the account he gives in the later article of the problematic, i.e., unintelligible, nature of the 'belief that God exists' can be discovered if one pays close attention to the account he gives, among other things, of the circumstances surrounding the formation of the 'grammar' of the word 'God' in the earlier article.

Secondly, as Malcolm expresses the point in the later article, the claim that a 'belief in' God logically involves some affective state or attitude, e.g., awe or trust, is quite distinct from the claim made in the earlier article that the genesis of the concept of God is to be found in certain human phenomena and experiences. There is no incompatability between the two accounts or claims, however. Indeed it is not difficult to see that religious belief born, as it were, out of 'a storm in the soul' will be entertained affectively. For Malcolm, then, what apparently makes a belief a religious belief is its

inclusion in a distinct 'form of life', its genesis in the emotions and its affective nature. What is important to note is that for Malcolm there can be no theoretical, no non-affective, affirmation of God's existence, no 'form of life' independent, affirmation of God's existence.

Having traced the genesis of Malcolm's conclusions and arguments found in the later article back to his earlier 'Ontological Argument' article, I would like now, in conclusion, to make some critical comments with reference to the validity of the argument and conclusions stated by Malcolm in the later article.

Interestingly enough, considering my earlier remarks on the Genetic Fallacy, what Malcolm has to say, in this later article, about the distinction between 'believing that' and 'believing in' God is originally stimulated by his desire to deny the claim that, with regard to religious belief in particular, "a natural causal explanation of religious belief would or could undermine its truth or respectability." (40) The truth of the belief is not here claimed to be a function of its psychological or causal origin; rather a weaker point is claimed, viz. that no valid causal explanation, or genetical account of religious belief could in any way count against the truth of such a belief. To back up his claim Malcolm gives us the following example:

> "If such a causal explanation were true, then that is the way (or one way) God does it. Suppose we learned that the dividing of the Red Sea, which permitted the Israelites to escape from the Egyptians, was probably caused by a

> strong wind. Would there be anything inappropriate in the thought that this is how God accomplished his purpose? I cannot see that there would." (41)

Well it depends what meaning you give to the claim that this is '<u>how</u> God accomplished his purpose'. Two possibilities suggest themselves here. First of all, God <u>acted</u> in some supernatural way to specially cause the strong wind which divided the Red Sea. Secondly, God did <u>not</u> act in any <u>special</u> way, apart from his general act of sustaining the universe, and the event of the strong wind dividing the Red Sea was, therefore, as natural an event as any other event in the universe. Now if we accept the first possibility it seems inappropriate to refer to this event as having a <u>natural</u> causal explanation. The occurrence of the strong wind dividing the Red Sea is <u>caused</u> by direct divine activity of God. Alternatively, if we accept the second possibility, what meaning can we give to the claim that this is an instance of how God '<u>accomplished</u> his purpose'? In an important sense God did not act, apart from his general activity involved in sustaining the universe. But if that activity of sustaining is to be considered an action, then God is responsible, in the same way, for every individual event that occurs. Either alternative is unacceptable. The first alternative, if true, would prevent one from claiming that one <u>had</u> presented a <u>natural causal</u> explanation; the second alternative, if true, would prohibit one from validly claiming that one had presented a natural explanation of an event that was <u>performed</u> or <u>accomplished</u> by God, i.e., a natural explanation of a <u>religious</u> event.

However, despite these particular difficulties, Malcolm believes that what prevents many philosophers from accepting

the claim that natural causal explanations of religious belief would not undermine its truth is the supposition or assumption, often made, that

> "there is a particular belief, namely, the belief that God exists, and with this belief as with any other we must make a distinction between causes of the belief and grounds or evidence for its truth." (42)

It is this 'belief that God exists' which strikes Malcolm as a problematic concept as opposed to 'belief in God' which is not a problematic concept. Now, as we have already seen, in the case of a 'belief that God exists', what Malcolm wants to deny is not simply that no distinction can be drawn between the causes of the belief and grounds or evidence for its truth but, more fundamentally, the very intelligibility of the belief itself. 'Belief in' God is the only possible expression or affirmation of a belief which has "God as its object." (43)

Now it is important to stress that for Malcolm 'belief in God' not only "involves some affective state or attitude" but also has "God as its object," (44) because Malcolm's arguments, concerning the unintelligibility of a 'belief that God exists', have led certain philosophers, notably Professor Flew, to deny that Malcolm's analysis of the content of a 'belief in' allows Malcolm to claim that there is any 'object' presupposed by the 'belief in'. As Flew states:

> "... supposing that belief in God does necessarily require some appropriate response, it may still, indeed it must, also presuppose something for that response to be a response to. To what, to focus on the worshipping centre of Christian theism, does Malcolm think the true

believer believes he is addressing his prayers?" (45)

Malcolm could very well reply, 'God is the object of the response', but what he would deny is that one could express such a reply in some such terms as 'a 'belief in' necessarily presupposes a 'belief that''. Rather, God, as the object of the religious response is part of the content of the 'belief in'. A 'belief in' God involves some affective state or attitude, with God as its object. To claim that such a 'belief in' presupposes a 'belief that God exists' would be to give expression to an utterance that is unintelligible.

If we refer back, however, to Malcolm's argument we shall see that not only is Malcolm wishing to deny that, in the case of a belief in God a distinction can be drawn between the 'causes of the belief' and 'grounds or evidence for its truth'; but further, the claim made by philosophers, whether or not a belief in God based on grounds or evidences is justifiable is the "first and great question" to be decided - there being "time enough later to determine how one should regard him." (46) That is, Malcolm wants to rule out of court the question, 'Is it the case that 'God really exists'?' if that is understood as a question asked in a non-affective way and demanding a non-affective response. Does however Malcom's argument provide him with good reasons for rejecting that question, or, if the question is answered in the affirmative, for rejecting the 'belief that' God exists?

Two considerations incline me to reject his arguments here. First of all, surely it is the case that the non-affective 'belief that' God exists has, despite what Malcolm claims,

entered into a 'form of life' and a 'religious form of life' at that? I am referring, of course, to the 'form of life' of religious apologetics where it has been claimed that one can not only promulgate but further advocate the 'belief that' there is a God, and this on the basis of the grounds and evidence which can be obtained for the belief. Thus, within this 'religious form of life' an affirmative answer or response is given to the question of whether or not God exists and the answer is thought to be justifiable on the basis of the evidence and grounds there presented. There, an evidential 'belief that' there is a God is expressed and not only expressed but advocated as a belief that deserves or ought to be accepted by all religious and non-religious individuals alike. Surely, further, such a 'belief that' can only play such a role if the expression of the 'belief that' God exists is intelligible, if it is generally understood, by both believer and non-believer, what is involved in 'believing that' God exists? The 'grammar' of the word 'God', the sense of the concept cannot be peculiar to, the sole property of, those individuals who 'partake' in the 'religious form of life'.

Secondly, even if what is distinctive of a religious belief in God's existence is best expressed in terms of a 'belief in' God, as illustrated by Malcolm - a belief involving some affective state or attitude - does this fact enable us to ignore or neglect questions as to whether the object, God, of the religious belief or response actually exists? Surely not, because as well as questioning the appropriateness of the particular attitude involved in such attitudes "varying from reverential love to rebellious rejection" (47)-one could also ask the more fundamental question as to whether the object of the attitudes

actually exists? To believe in God may well necessarily involve the holding of certain affective states or attitudes towards the object of the belief, but that is not all that is involved. As W. D. Hudson correctly states:

> "... if he (Malcolm) thinks that he has answered or eliminated that question (the question of God's existence), he is confusing a necessary condition of religious belief with a sufficient condition of it. He is supposing that belief-in is enough to constitute religious belief given the explicit exclusion of belief-that. This is plainly mistaken. It is true that religious belief is not simply the belief that God exists but it is equally true that it is not thus exclusively belief in God." (48)

Now the argument mounted by Malcolm, to justify his claim that 'belief that God exists' is a problematic concept', was only presented because, as we saw, Malcolm believed that the basis of our willingness to admit that, in the case of a belief in God's existence we must make a distinction between causes of the belief and grounds or evidence for its truth, was to be found in our finding intelligible the claim that there was this particular belief - the 'belief that God exists'. Malcolm also, however, attacks another assumption he finds made here - the assumption that we would know what would constitute good grounds, reasons or evidence for such a belief. He claims:

> "... even if the belief that God exists is a non-problematic concept, we seem to have no clear conception of what would be reasons, grounds or evidence for this belief." (49)

Now it is not merely that we have no clear conception of what will constitute good or bad evidence here which troubles Malcolm,

it is rather the stronger point that the very idea of having or presenting evidence, grounds or reasons for one's religious beliefs seems entirely inappropriate. He states:

> "Nothing is put forward in the Old or New Testament as evidence for the existence of God. Someone whose religious concepts were formed exclusively from the Bible, might regard this question of evidence as an alien intrusion. ... It is my impression that this question of evidence plays no part in workaday religious instruction and practice, but puts in an appearance only when the language is idling." (50)

It may indeed be the case that nothing is advanced in the Old and New Testament as evidence for God's existence - though I think this claim is in <u>fact</u> false - but even if what Malcolm claims is true, this does not justify his further claim that the question of evidence is an 'alien intrusion'. What certainly does seem to be true is that God's existence <u>may</u> be <u>assumed</u> or presupposed in 'workaday religious practice', but questions of evidence are indeed relevant to the assertion of God's existence. 'But not in workaday religious instruction and practice', Malcolm might argue, and 'if', he might continue, 'you are thinking of religious apologetics, as earlier described, as an example of a 'religious form of life' - in reference to my claim made previously - then you are mistaken because there, if questions of evidence arise, language is idling.' But all this demonstrates is that what Malcolm <u>means</u> by 'workaday religious instruction and practice' is such that questions of evidence cannot arise; he most certainly has not <u>demonstrated</u> that <u>in principle</u> 'workaday religious instruction and practice' would <u>necessarily</u> rule out references to evidence. In fact it is difficult to see

how he could proceed to do this given the role, for example, religious apologetics does play in the religious life - a role, incidentally, which does not occur 'when the language is idling'. The belief in God's existence can be questioned by religious people, further it can be questioned with reference to the evidence available or not available to justify the belief. Such questions can arise within religious belief and are not 'alien phenomena' totally divorced from religious life and practice.

Surely however, with reference to the question of evidence, unless religious belief involves empirical consequences, consequences which can provide evidence for or against the belief "then it does not 'get a grip' on the world; it does not really deserve the name of 'belief'." (51) Professor Hick expresses the point in the following way:

> "... there can only be any point, and in that sense only any meaning, in the statement that x exists or is real - whether x be an electron, a human being, a quasor, God or anything else - if it makes an appropriate experienceable difference whether x exists. If x is so defined that it makes no difference within human experience, past, present or future, whether it be there or not, then the apparent assertion by one human being to another that it exists does not really assert anything." (52)

For Malcolm, this problem crystallizes itself into the question of whether or not the concept of God has any content and, further, whether or not such content implies certain expectations as to how things are or will be in the world. As Malcolm states:

> "if my concept of God has any content then I must have some beliefs, and some of these beliefs might be called 'expectations'." (53)

What, however, is meant by 'expectations' here? Malcolm presents us with two examples and I shall relate and comment on each separately. For the first example Malcolm refers to the Bible (Mark 11 : 23-24). He states:

> "As part of my concept of God I might have the belief that faith in God will cause this mountain to be cast into the sea. But if the mountain does not move shall I conclude that the belief is false; or that God does not exist? It need not be so. I might conclude instead that my faith was not strong enough. If I drew this latter conclusion, would that be evidence that I did not really believe that faith will move mountains? Quite the contrary. The belief might be held by me in such a way that no fact of experience could falsify it." (54)

Now, as K. Nielsen has pointed out, what is crucial here is the status Malcolm accords to the word 'could' in the last sentence quoted. (55) If the 'could' here is not a logical 'could' then it is, at least, logically possible that some fact of experience could serve to verify or falsify the belief. But this does not seem to fit what Malcolm has in mind. However, if the 'could' is understood logically, such that what is being maintained is that it is inconceivable that any fact of experience could verify or falsify the belief, and this does seem to be the sense of 'could' which Malcolm has in mind, then the belief does seem to be devoid of 'expectations', at least in any normal sense of the term.

At this stage, however, Malcolm warns us that:

> "there are beliefs and beliefs. Some of them do not issue in expectations in such a way that their fulfilment or non-fulfilment would be a verification or falsification of the beliefs." (56)

As an instance of such a belief Malcolm provides us with this second example:

> "Another item of content in my concept of God might be the belief that if I am truly repentant my sins will be forgiven. Does this belief have to be held in such a way, or is it generally held in such a way, that it is verifiable or falsifiable in experience? Certainly not ... a belief can get a grip on the world in another way. The man who believes that his sins will be forgiven if he is truly repentant, might thereby be saved from despair. What he believes has, for him, no verification or falsification; yet the belief makes a great difference to his action and feeling." (57)

This last sentence is odd. Surely what the believer believes does have a verification or falsification; his belief, that if he is truly repentant his sins will be forgiven, is confirmed by his repenting and <u>being saved from despair</u>. However, I suspect that Malcolm wants to retain a usage for verification and falsification such that what can only intelligibly be said to be verified or falsified are beliefs about events in the world and, of course, it is other events in the world which serve to verify or falsify them. In the case of such a belief, as Malcolm provides in his example, we are rather to think of this belief as getting a 'grip on the world' by viewing the difference such a belief makes to a '<u>man's actions</u> and <u>feelings</u>'. Note now, however, that in trying to illustrate the nature of a religious

belief with a 'grip on the world', a concept of God with a content, what we are referred to is not any conceivable or actual empirical event or events but rather statements of human psychology, to what occurs in the personality of the religious believer. Flew, if perhaps he had this latter claim in mind, would appear to be quite justified then, when he expressed his doubts as to whether Malcolm's analysis of the content of a 'belief in' God presupposed the existence of some object for the 'belief in' to be a religious response to. To have a religious belief, it seems then, is to have a belief which will determine, direct and control one's attitudes and feelings, but it is not a kind of belief which finds expression in claims concerning the nature of the world. It gets 'its grip on the world in another way'.

Certain points, developed here, require greater elucidation and I intend to do this at a later stage in the development of the essay. However, I want to pause here because Malcolm's claim, among others, that intelligible assertions of God's existence can only be formed from within the religious 'form of life' has been forcefully argued for, in much greater detail, by D. Z. Phillips. I wish now to consider his arguments and the arguments of those other philosophers who have either been influenced by or influenced him.

CHAPTER 2

i

PROLEGOMENON

For D. Z. Phillips "contemporary philosophy of religion has benefitted little from Wittgenstein's later epistemology." (1) This is so because philosophers have failed to realise that "religious concepts have their meaning within a certain form of life," (2) and "the intelligibility of the family of language-games covered by the term 'religion' is not assessed by wider criteria of meaningfulness." (3) For Phillips then, the role of philosophy is to <u>understand</u> religious beliefs, give a <u>conceptual</u> account of them, and this entails that it can be no part of the job of philosophy to either critically assess or sympathetically advocate religious beliefs. "Philosophy," says Phillips, with the thought of Wittgenstein very much in mind,

> "is neither for nor against religion: 'it leaves everything as it is'. This fact distinguishes philosophy from apologetics. It is not the task of the philosopher to decide whether there is a God or not but to ask what it means to affirm or deny the existence of God." (4)

Philosophy must explore the 'depth grammar' of religious belief, not the 'surface grammar', (5) and the account it gives can only be judged adequate according to whether or not it coheres with the "complex behaviour of religious believers". (6)

Thus, if the "philosopher wants to give an account of religion, he must pay attention to what religious believers do and say" (7) but such an account can only represent a conceptual understanding of religious belief and language; it can in no way

be thought of as providing a justification or otherwise of such religious belief and language. Indeed the "whole conception ... of religion standing in need of justification is confused." (8) It is not

> "the task of philosophy to settle the question of whether a man is talking to God or not, but to ask what it means to affirm or deny that a man is talking to God." (9)

This means that philosophers (and here Phillips seems to have Professors Flew and Hepburn in mind) who believe that religious belief and language stand in need of justification, of explanation, and who see their philosophical task or role as

> "pointing out, and, if possible, correcting ... linguistic mistakes ... religious believers make"

are not only misled as to the nature and role of philosophy but further are illicitly claiming "to detect a norm of meaningfulness which can test the validity of religious statements " - the norm "being ordinary language". (10) Such philosophers have paid

> "too much attention to the surface grammar of religious statements. They have assumed too readily that words such as 'existence', 'love', 'will', are used in the same way of God as they are used of human beings, animate and inanimate objects. Depth grammar is made explicit by asking what can and what cannot be said of the concept in question. To understand the limits of what can be said about a concept, one must take account of the context in which the concept is used." (11)

This does not mean, however, that it makes no difference whether in religion one thing is said rather than another,

even though the distinction between what is sayable and unsayable does not amount to the same in every context; there "must be a distinction between what is rational and what is irrational," (12) though such a distinction can only be applied within religion. Only, "this is not to say that there is a paradigm of rationality to which all modes of discourse conform." (13) What the terms 'reality', 'rationality' and 'exist' mean differs from discourse to discourse. Thus:

> "a necessary prolegomenon to the philosophy of religion ... is to show the diversity of criteria of rationality; to show that the distinction between the real and the unreal does not come to the same in every context." (14)

It is to the writings of Professor P. Winch that Phillips specifically refers when wishing to point out the diversity of these criteria (15) and Winch claims to be fairly reflecting what is explicitly or implicitly implied in the writings of the later philosophy of Wittgenstein. Thus, I wish now to turn to critically examine Winch's claims and arguments.

Winch's views receive their most detailed expression in, to a lesser extent, his book The Idea of a Social Science, (16) and in an essay entitled 'Understanding a Primitive Society'. (17) Winch's main concern is with the general question of what is involved in understanding human social life but, in his essay, he is primarily interested in issues connected with social anthropology, although he does indicate how his arguments and claims could be applied to religion and religious belief. Winch in his essay initially critically considers the work of the anthropologist E. E. Evans-Pritchard as found in his book

Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande. According to Evans-Pritchard the African Azande believe that certain of their members are witches who are able to exercise a malignant occult influence over other members of the tribe such that it is necessary to engage in elaborate rites, consult oracles and use magic medicines to protect themselves from their harmful influences. Now, given that the Azande believe this to be the case, believe that there are witches with such powers as described, then, according to Evans-Pritchard, their subsequent behaviour is quite logical. The only trouble or difficulty is that although the behaviour of the Azande is quite logical in the sense defined according to Evans-Pritchard, it is unscientific. And it is unscientific because it is not in accord with objective reality, with objective facts. As a matter of objective fact there are no witches. Evans-Pritchard sums up his distinction between the 'logical' and the 'scientific' in the following way:

> "Scientific notions are those which accord with objective reality both with regard to the validity of their premises and to the inferences drawn from their propositions ... Logical notions are those in which according to the rules of thought inferences would be true were the premises true, the truth of the premises being irrelevant ... A pot has broken during firing. This is probably due to grit. Let us examine the pot and see if this is the case. That is logical and scientific thought. Sickness is due to witchcraft. A man is sick. Let us consult the oracles to discover who is the witch responsible. That is logical and unscientific thought." (19)

Now Winch objects to Evans-Pritchard's arguments and conclusions here on two main grounds. First of all he objects to the implicit claim, assumed by Evans-Pritchard, that the Azande's belief in witches must be some kind of scientific belief and, secondly, he fundamentally disagrees with Evans-Pritchard's attempt to "characterize the scientific in terms of that which is 'in accord with objective reality'." (20) What is fundamentally wrong with this last claim is that it presupposes that

> "the conception of 'reality' must be regarded as intelligible and applicable outside the context of scientific reasoning itself, since it is that to which scientific notions do, and unscientific notions do not, have a relation. Evans-Pritchard, although he emphasizes that a member of a scientific culture has a different conception of reality from that of a Zande believer in magic, wants to go beyond merely registering this fact and making the differences explicit, and to say, finally, that the scientific conception agrees with what reality actually is like, whereas the magical conception does not." (21)

There are beliefs and beliefs and not all of these are scientific beliefs and there are ideas of 'reality' and what it is to be in 'accord with reality' which do not involve reference to empirical testing and observation by experiment, i.e. scientific reasoning. Certainly it is true, Winch claims, that men's ideas and beliefs must be checkable by reference to some reality. But this does not mean that it is legitimate to pass judgement on the Azande way of life by invoking concepts of reality and accordance with reality which have an application within our culture, our "Twentieth century European culture". (22) We cannot legitimately claim that the Azande's belief in

witches is a false belief on the basis that the scientific criteria operative in our society shows it to be so. The check of the independently real is not peculiar to science, and it is just here, in elucidation of what he means, that we can begin to see the connection with and importance of what Winch has to say to religious belief. He states:

> "The trouble is that the fascination science has for us makes it easy for us to adopt its scientific form as a paradigm against which to measure the intellectual respectability of other modes of discourse. Consider what God says to Job out of the whirlwind: 'Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge? ... Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding ... Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? he that reproveth God, Let him answer it.' Job is taken to task for having gone astray by having lost sight of the reality of God; this does not, of course, mean that Job has made any sort of theoretical mistake, which could be put right, perhaps, by means of an experiment. God's reality is certainly independent of what any man may care to think, but what that reality amounts to can only be seen from the religious tradition in which the concept of God is used, and this use is very unlike the use of scientific concepts, say of theoretical entities. The point is that it is <u>within</u> the religious use of language that the conception of God's reality has its place, though, I repeat, this does not mean that it is at the mercy of what anyone cares to say; if this were so, God would have no reality." (23)

Now for Winch it is not only the case that it is '<u>within</u> the religious use of language that the conception of God's

reality has its place' but further

> "reality is not what gives language sense. What is real and what is unreal shows itself <u>in</u> the sense that language has. Further, both the distinction between the real and the unreal and the concept of agreement with reality themselves belong to our language ... we could not in fact distinguish the real from the unreal without understanding the way this distinction operates in the language. If then we wish to understand the significance of these concepts, we must examine the use they actually do have - <u>in</u> the language." (24)

There is no language-independent or context-independent idea of reality which can be used to assess conceptions of reality found in any particular language or use of language. The notions of 'reality' and of 'accordance with reality' only have meaning, are intelligible, within particular uses of language. One can only intelligibly ask, 'What is real?' or 'What is in accordance with reality?' within the context or use of a particular language.

Not only do such claims refer to concepts of reality but further, for Winch, "standards of rationality in different societies do not always coincide ... there are differences in criteria of rationality." (25) Although Winch does initially admit here that the possibilities of there being different criteria are "limited by certain formal requirements centering round the demand for consistency," he then proceeds to nullify his qualification by claiming that "these formal requirements tell us nothing about what in particular is to <u>count</u> as consistency." (26) However without a concept of reality, without a concept of rationality, we would not have a language. As Winch

relates with reference to the concept of rationality: "It is a concept necessary to the existence of any language: to say of a society that it has a language is also to say that it has a concept of rationality." (27)

In the Idea of a Social Science Winch summarises his own claims very succinctly. There we are told, with reference to the problem of what is involved in understanding something, grasping its sense, that

> "if we look at the contexts in which the notions of understanding, of making something intelligible, are used we find that these differ widely amongst themselves. Moreover, if those contexts are examined and compared, it soon becomes apparent that the notion of intelligibility is systematically ambiguous ... in its use in those contexts: that is, its sense varies systematically according to the particular context in which it is being used." (28)

However as Winch himself maintains, the main argument of his book, the central thesis which he is trying to give expression to in both his book and his article, revolves round the following claim:

> "Criteria of logic are not a direct gift of God, but arise out of, and are only intelligible in the context of, ways of living or modes of social life. It follows that one cannot apply criteria of logic to modes of social life as such. For instance, science is one such mode and religion is another; and each has criteria of intelligibility peculiar to itself. So within science or religion actions can be logical or illogical: in science, for example, it would be illogical to refuse to be bound by the results of a properly carried out experiment; in religion it would be illogical to suppose

> that one could pit one's strength against God's; and so on. But we cannot sensibly say that either the practice of science itself or that of religion is either illogical or logical; both are non-logical." (29)

There is much here that demands close scrutiny. First of all let us look at the broad sweep of the argument. Winch begins by asking what is involved in understanding another culture - in particular the Azande culture. That is, he is concerned with issues connected with social anthropology. He critically examines Evans-Pritchard's account of Azande life, his approach to the problem of understanding involved. He applauds Evans-Pritchard's attempts to present the sense of the Azande's beliefs and institutions, to show the 'logical' nature of the Azande's subsequent behaviour and action given their initial beliefs and attitudes. However he parts company with Evans-Pritchard, he believes Evans-Pritchard to be crucially wrong when he claims that, although the Azande's thoughts and actions are logical, they are, however, not in accord with objective reality, because the concepts and beliefs of the Azande are not scientific notions or beliefs and it is only scientific notions 'which accord with objective reality'. Now while Winch sympathises with Evans-Pritchard's difficulties - difficulties which arise for any anthropologist studying an alien culture and wishing to 'make its beliefs and practices intelligible', difficulties which can lead an anthropologist to give an account of the alien culture 'that will somehow satisfy the criteria of rationality demanded by the culture to which he and his readers belong', such a culture being one 'whose conception of rationality is deeply affected by the achievements and methods of the

sciences' (30) - he, however, believes Evans-Pritchard makes two crucial errors here. First of all, he objects to Evans-Pritchard's assumption that the Azande's belief in witches must be a scientific belief and, secondly, his attempt to characterize the scientific in terms of what is really in 'accord with objective reality', an attempt which presupposes that the notion of being 'in accord with objective reality' is intelligible outside the area of scientific discourse such that one can stand outside scientific reasoning and concepts and assess scientific concepts and beliefs as being those which do in fact accord with objective reality.

Now to give content to his argument here Winch refers us to particular religious beliefs found and developed in our own culture - '20th century European culture'. He refers, in particular, to the beliefs and difficulties of Job as set out in the Christian Bible. By reference to the story of Job Winch hopes to show, or illustrate, that (a) here we have a set of beliefs which are not scientific beliefs - beliefs, moreover, which in their point and practice may be similar to Azande beliefs in that they both "may express an attitude to contingencies" (31) and beliefs which furthermore both derive their point or importance from their aim to provide "a sense of the significance of human life" (32)-and (b) what constitutes God's reality can only be seen from within the religious tradition in which the concept of God is used, reality not giving language sense but rather 'what is real and unreal showing itself in the sense that language has'. What applies here to the religious case applies equally, for Winch, to the Azande magical culture.

Note here however, first of all, the move which is made.

Winch's original problem was to try and plot what is involved in an anthropologist understanding, or claiming to understand, an alien culture. That is, an anthropologist - a 'member of 20th century European culture', a 'culture deeply affected by the achievements and methods of the sciences'-tries to understand, in the example given, the social structure and beliefs of the African Azande. A member of one culture tries to understand an alien culture, a culture of which he is not a member. Suddenly, however, one finds that Winch, in trying to explicate and expound what is involved here, or more precisely what is not involved, refers us to 'modes of social life', religion and science each constituting one, activities which singularly or together are practised within a culture and which go to make up or constitute a culture. That is, the initial contrast is between two cultures: the Azande culture with its 'magical beliefs and practices constituting a principal foundation of its social life' (33) and '20th century European culture', a scientific culture. But, as the argument proceeds, we are then presented with a contrast between modes of social life -modes of social life which, in the case of the examples used, go to make up or constitute '20th century European culture'. And it is argued that just the same relationships exist between these 'modes of social life' within a culture as exist between cultures. Criteria of reality, rationality, logic, etc. are not only systematically ambiguous between cultures but also between modes of social life within a culture. Now surely this claim is unacceptable? Even if one may accept what Winch has to say concerning the contrast between cultures, this does not entail that one may or ought to accept what he has to say about relationships between modes of

social life, or at least not without some argument being given to justify his claim. Now Winch himself might appear to accept this point because he does state, when discussing the distinction drawn between modes of social life, the following:

> "This is, of course, an over-simplification, in that it does not allow for the overlapping character of different modes of social life. Somebody might, for instance, have religious reasons for devoting his life to science. But I do not think that this affects the substance of what I want to say, though it would make its precise expression in detail more complicated." (34)

Perhaps the counter example presented may not affect the substance of what he has to say but one would have thought that his admission of the possibility of overlap would do so, and not simply, or merely, have made the precise expression of his argument more complicated. Thus, I would conclude, simply from examining Winch's arguments we are in no way provided with any justification for concluding that points made, claims made, concerning what is involved in understanding an alien culture or society justify us in applying such points or conclusions to 'modes of social life' to be found <u>within</u> a culture or society - in the case in question within our present culture or society.

A person then may be a member of only one culture at any given time but he may participate in many different 'modes of social life' within a culture. One may indeed even wonder why - given the putative truth of this account of the existence of different modes of social life within, in particular, 20th century European society or culture and all <u>that</u> entails for Winch, - the original problem, as described by Winch, of understanding an

alien or primitive society should ever have arisen. Such a problem, as Winch characterises it, only arises (a) because in trying to understand an alien society we not only ... apply scientific criteria of reality, rationality but also (b) because such criteria are accepted in the society as the criteria, as a 'demand of the culture'. Now if what Winch maintains is correct concerning the possibility of our participation in different modes of social life in our culture or society, science being merely one such mode, why has such a problem ever arisen? Why are scientific criteria accepted as dominant? Surely if Winch's claims are correct it should be impossible to explain such a dominance? May it not rather be the case that our treating scientific criteria as the criteria to be applied is not, as Winch would perhaps have us believe, an expression of a prejudice but rather an explicit expression of a belief or assumption that such criteria are the proper criteria to be applied, on the grounds that they are the criteria which are in accord with objective reality? Success achieved in applying scientific criteria may be no accident. Such facts may at least militate against accepting the Winchian analysis of the situation.

Further, is it the case that criteria of rationality, criteria of logic are culture-or mode of social life-dependent as Winch would have us believe? (As to what constitutes criteria of rationality or criteria of logic we are left in the dark, even though we may find it difficult here to present an understanding of either rationality or logic such that we could differentiate the two.) Now, as we saw, Winch at one stage of his argument did admit that the possibilities of there being different criteria are 'limited by certain formal requirements

centering round the demand for consistency', although we are warned that these formal requirements provide no information as to what 'in particular is to count as consistency'. "Logical relations between propositions themselves depend on social relations between men." (35) Now this is surely unacceptable because as S. Lukes states:

> "Does this imply that the concept of negation and the laws of identity and non-contradiction need not operate in ... language? If so, then it must be mistaken, for if the members of a society do not possess even these, how could we ever understand their thought, their inferences and arguments? Could they even be credited with the possibility of inferring, arguing or even thinking? If, for example, they were unable to see that the truth of p excludes the truth of its denial, how could they ever communicate truths to one another and reason from them to other truths." (36)

With this account I concur but I disagree with the conclusion which Lukes wishes to draw from his argument here. He wishes to argue that such criteria of rationality are universal but it seems to me that M. Hollis is correct when he argues that such rational criteria "are not so much universal as necessary." (37) The criteria of rationality operative in '20th century European culture' do not represent just one kind of "rational thought nor rational thought just one species of thought." (38)

Further, consider again the example given by Winch to illustrate what is meant by different criteria of logic. 'Criteria of logic,' we are told, 'arise out of and are only intelligible in the context of ... modes of social life,' science representing one such mode and religion another.

'Within science or religion actions can be logical or illogical: in science, for example, it would be illogical to refuse to be bound by the results of a properly carried out experiment; in religion it would be illogical to suppose that one could pit one's strength against God's.' Criteria of logic are context dependent, they only have application within a mode of social life, that is where they only can be applied intelligibly. 'Criteria of logic are not a direct gift of God', by which remark, I think, Winch means that there are no universal, no context-independent criteria of logic which can have a universal application either within modes of social life or be applied to modes of social life. Look however at the examples given to illustrate the context dependency of criteria of logic. In science it would be illogical not to accept the results of a properly conducted experiment. Certainly, given that one wishes to practise science, being bound by the results of such experiments is one of the elements which would constitute what is involved in being a scientist. The action is logical given one's aim, the wish to be a scientist, and the intention to indulge in scientific practise and procedure. Equally in the religious example, given that one is a religious believer, with a proper understanding of the nature of God and a desire to worship him, it would be illogical to believe that one's strength could match God's. (Although I do think there is this difference. Not to be bound by the results of a properly conducted experiment is to cease to be a scientist but to believe that one can pit one's strength against God may not mean that one ceases to be a believer. One's action may indicate that one is in a state of rebellion against God and rebellion here may be a religious

phenomenon and not a non-religious phenomenon.) Do however the examples given illustrate that different criteria of logic are involved? I would have thought that both actions are logical or illogical in exactly the same sense. Given the beliefs and principles which constitute each mode of social life, the participant in each mode of social life is, in the examples quoted, acting either logically or illogically in exactly the same sense in behaving in either of the two possible ways open to him. Certainly the contexts in which the 'criteria of logic' are applied differ but this does not mean, nor do Winch's examples justify his assertion, that 'criteria of logic' are context-dependent.

However, despite the rather negative appraisal presented here of Winch's arguments and ideas, I believe that at least some elucidation has been given of the Winchian conception of the diversity of criteria of reality, rationality and logic and I wish now to turn to consider, in more depth, how Phillips and others, who accept this Winchian analysis, apply in detail these findings to religious belief.

ii

'GRAMMAR OF THE REALITY OF GOD'

For D. Z. Phillips, Malcolm's reformulation of Anselm's Ontological Argument is of the greatest significance for religious belief. This is so, because, claims Phillips,

> "despite many opinions to the contrary, it cannot be said that Malcolm argues from the logical possibility of concepts to the real possibility of things. What he is concerned to show, and what he believes Anselm is concerned to show, is that real possibilities are not exhausted by the real possibility of things. God is not a thing; he is not an existent among existents." (39)

This is debatable. Certainly Malcolm believed that he had demonstrated that God is not a contingent being or existent but a necessary Being, not a thing in this sense, but surely at the time of writing the Ontological Argument article he did believe that it was justifiable to deduce God's necessary existence from his characterization of him as a being a greater than which cannot be conceived,- to move from the 'logical possibility of a concept to the real possibility of a thing' in this other and important sense of the term. For Phillips however,

> "it is clear that Malcolm sees one of the main contributions of the ontological argument to be a clarification of the grammar of the reality of God in Hebrew and Christian traditions." (40)

And the contribution of this clarification shows itself for Phillips in that

> "The ontological argument rightly locates the difficulty where religious belief is concerned in the understanding; the difficulty of comprehending the idea of an eternal God. To have the idea of God is to know God." (41)

But surely such clarification of the 'grammar of the reality of God' is simply the Ontological Argument move from 'the logical possibility of a concept to the real possibility of a thing' writ large? 'To have the idea of God is to know God' is as good an expression of the import and significance of the traditional Ontological Argument as one could hope to find.

Phillips will have none of this. He states:

> "What the ontological argument and Malcolm's discussion of it achieve is to show us the kinds of questions one can and cannot ask about belief in God. No doubt many philosophers regard Malcolm's article as 'a victory for religion', but that is a mistaken view of it. What Malcolm does is to stop us in our tracks when we want to ask certain questions about God. ... One of the most important conclusions of the enquiry is to show that philosophical assent to the <u>kind</u> of being God can be said to possess, does not entail belief in God. ... This, I believe, is Malcolm's point when he says of the ontological argument, 'I can imagine an atheist going through the argument, becoming convinced of its validity, actually defending it against objections, yet remaining an atheist.'" (42)

We must, however, remember that such an 'atheist' for Malcolm could still affirm 'There is a God' even though he couldn't participate in the 'religious form of life', - he did not have a 'living faith', did not 'believe in' God in this sense.

Phillips rejects even this conclusion of Malcolm's argument. Malcolm is being overscrupulous "about surface grammar" when he claims this we are told. (43)

If the main contribution of the Ontological Argument is, then, not to provide a proof that God exists but rather to 'locate the difficulty where religious belief is concerned in the understanding', what precise articulation is given to this contribution by Phillips? Well, for Phillips, what is terribly important for philosophers discussing the existence of God is to determine

> "the conceptual category to which the reality of God belongs ... this is the primary question to be answered: what kind of philosophical account does the concept of divine reality call for?" (44)

Or again:

> "What we want to know is what is meant by an existential proposition which has God as its subject." (45)

To answer this last question Phillips asks us to consider the following analogy.

> "Many philosophical discussions of the question, 'What kind of reality is divine reality?' have assumed that it is logically akin to the question 'Is this physical object real or not?' I suggest that it is closer to the question, 'What kind of reality is the reality of physical objects?' The latter question does not concern the results of any possible empirical investigation. It is not a question which can be answered experimentally, since the kind of reality it wishes to investigate is <u>presupposed</u> by any experimentation. It is a question regarding the possibility of the distinction

> between truth and falsity in the empirical world; a question logically prior to that of deciding the truth or falsity of the alleged existence of a physical object ... similarly, the question of the reality of God which is of interest to the philosopher is a question about a kind of reality; a question about the possibility of giving an account of the distinction between truth and falsity, sense and nonsense in religion. This is not a question of experimentation any more than the question of the reality of the physical world, but a question of conceptual elucidation." (46)

Now of course it is true that a mistake is being made if someone equates what it means to talk of God's existence with talk about the existence of physical objects. The mistake, too, would be a conceptual one, - it would reveal a lack of understanding of the concept of divine reality. However, in philosophical discussions of the question of God's existence have philosophers 'assumed that' the divine reality can be compared to the reality of a physical object? Surely Phillips' point here should be, not that philosophers have 'assumed that', but rather have spoken 'as if' God's reality was akin to that of the reality of a physical object? But even if one agrees that it is a mistake to think of that which constitutes divine reality as in any way akin to the reality of a physical object, surely it does not follow that, with regard to the question of divine reality, 'experimentation' is ruled out and all that is required is conceptual elucidation? Cannot one talk and don't religious people talk of 'discovering God', of 'finding out' that there is a God? Phillips rejects this, however, because

"that is not something that anyone could find out." (47)

Now in discovering why this is so, for Phillips, I think we can advance further Phillips' argument as to why conceptual elucidation is necessary in elucidating the reality of God. If one believed that one could 'find out' whether there is or is not a God, the mistake, as Phillips sees it, would reside in the implicit assumption that any "dispute between a believer and an unbeliever is over a matter of fact." (48) As Phillips states:

> "It makes as little sense to say 'God's existence is not a fact' as it does to say, 'God's existence is a fact'. In saying that something either is or is not a fact, I am not describing the 'something' in question. To say that x is a fact is to say something about the grammar of x; it is to indicate what it would and would not be sensible to say or do in connection with it. To say that the concept of divine reality does not share this grammar is to reject the possibility of talking about God in the way in which one talks about matters of fact." (49)

What is there, however, about the grammar of facts which rules out equating God's existence with a fact? First of all,

> "a fact might not have been ... On the other hand, the religious believer is not prepared to say that God might not exist." (50)

Secondly,

> "coming to see that there is a God is not like coming to see that an additional being exists. If it were there would be an extension of one's knowledge of facts, but no extension of one's understanding." (51)

Well, the first of these last two points obviously owes a debt to Malcolm's elucidation of the grammar of God's reality. God necessarily exists; it is simply inconceivable that God might either cease to exist or be caused to cease to exist, in short, might not exist. The proposition 'God exists', is a logically necessary truth. With reference to the second point however, why should 'coming to see that there is a God' not be like 'coming to see that an additional being exists' - a logically necessary being. It seems that Phillips can only make this claim by maintaining that existence can only mean contingent existence, and that he does so is evidenced by the fact that he maintains there would be 'an extension of one's knowledge of facts', facts earlier having been described as referring only to contingent states of affairs - states of affairs which 'might not have been'. a surprising claim when one remembers Malcolm's Wittgensteinian moves to illustrate that existential propositions can be necessary. However, if coming to see that there is a God is not like coming to see that an extra being exists, but rather involves an extension of one's understanding, what then is this extension of one's understanding?

Phillips states:

> "Discovering that belief in God is meaningful is not like establishing that something is the case within a universe of discourse with which we are already familiar. On the contrary it is to discover that there is a universe of discourse we had been unaware of." (52)

And, "to know how to use this language is to know God." (53) Or, as Rush Rhees states: "there could not be religion without the language of religion." (54) It is only if one imposes "the

grammar of another mode of discourse on religion - namely, our talk about physical objects" that it will appear that 'the word 'God' is the name of a thing.' (55) God's reality is not like the reality of physical objects or indeed of human beings. What it means to affirm God as real can only be discovered within the 'language-games' of religion. Just as "it does not make sense to suppose that physical objects in general do not exist," so, similarly, "the possibility of the unreality of God does not occur within any religion;" (56) or, "it makes no sense to say that God might not exist." (57)

Before making some critical comments here, allow me to explore further one of the above remarks. 'The possibility of the unreality of God does not occur within any religion', but it does arise, we are also told, "in disputes between religions". (58) First of all, this would surely suggest that the original analogy, drawn between the empirical world and religion, should be modified to an analogy between the empirical world and religions. However, if this were done, the significance or the import of the original analogy may well go. This is so because the question of the reality of God would then be 'a question of the possibility of sense and nonsense, truth and falsity, in a religion'. There would then be as many different divine realities as there are religions, and it may then be possible to enquire as to which God is the true God, empirical investigation being relevant; while such a question would be impossible with reference to the reality of the physical world, there only being one reality here. Secondly, while the reality of God may be tied to a religion, for Phillips however, the unreality of God does

not occur within any religion', indeed within a religion it 'makes no sense to say that God might not exist'. The question of God's existence is unaskable because to enquire here, to investigate, is to display a misunderstanding of the very concept of God. Can anything then be said about atheism or agnosticism? Are these simply ruled out as tenable philosophical positions? Phillips does not think this follows. As he states:

> "If, when the agnostic says, 'I don't know whether there is a God or not,' what he means is 'I do not know whether it means anything,' there is no philosophical objection to his position." (59)

A similar treatment is accorded to the atheist.

> "The most genuine indication of what atheism is ... is the recognition that religion means nothing to one; one is at a loss to know what to make of prayer, worship, creeds and so on. It is the form of atheism summed up in the phrases, 'I shouldn't call myself religious,' 'Religion has no meaning for me.' To this latter expression of unbelief there is no philosophical objection." (60)

The positions of the atheist and the agnostic are only philosophically respectable so long as they are understood to be claiming that, in an important sense, religion has no meaning for them. For religion - a religion, to be strictly accurate - to be found meaningful is for the participant to affirm the reality of God. One cannot claim to find a religion meaningful and at the same time deny the reality of the God found or discovered in that religion. 'To have an idea of God is to

know God' and 'to know how to use this language, know how to use religious concepts is to know God'. The Malcolmian Ontological Argument influence appears to come over strongly in these last remarks but yet, Phillips has warned us, we make a mistake if we think that the contribution of Malcolm's Ontological Argument is to provide some kind of 'victory for religion'. Rather, for Phillips, a major contribution of Malcolm's argument is to display to us 'the kind of questions one can and cannot ask about belief in God', - display the kind of reality God is said to possess, elucidate the status of assertions of God's existence. God's existence is not the subject of empirical investigation but rather 'conceptual elucidation'. But what, however, does this mean if 'conceptual elucidation' does not involve, mean or entail anything like the traditional moves made in the traditional Ontological Argument, i.e. a move from a concept to existence. To expound his claims here Phillips has referred us to his parallel or analogy between questions about the reality of God to questions about the reality of the physical world. So let us now turn to explore further this analogy as Phillips presents it.

In opposition to Phillips' claims, concerning the existence of a parallel or analogy between questions about God's reality and the reality of the physical world, Professor Hick claims the following:

> "The argument here seems to be: the user of physical object language cannot meaningfully ask whether the physical world exists, though he can seek as a philosopher to elucidate the kind of

> reality it has. Similarly the user of theistic language cannot meaningfully ask whether God exists; though he can as a philosopher seek to elucidate the kind of reality God has. But this is a question-begging parallel. Whereas everyone is a user of physical object language, so that there is no one in a position to ask seriously whether the physical world exists, by no means everyone is a user of theistic language [and one might add, as I have already claimed, and Phillips acknowledges, not all those who do use theistic language are all users of the same theistic language - deploy the same concept of God] and there are many who ask seriously whether God exists. In the context of universal agreement that there is a material world, the question about its existence or reality is (as Phillips rightly says) a conceptual question asking for an elucidation of the concept of a material object. But in the quite different context of dispute as to whether God exists the question about the reality of God is not only a conceptual question but also a question of fact and existence." (61)

Now Phillips responds to this objection by pouncing, quite correctly, on Professor Hick's use of the word 'agreement' in this context. He states:

> "He (Hick) says that whereas we are all agreed about the reality of the physical world, we are not all agreed about the reality of God. But when did we agree about the reality of physical objects? What would it be like to disagree?" (62)

If nothing can constitute our disagreeing, and the notion of 'disagreement' has no sense in this connection, then, equally, nothing can constitute our agreeing and thus the notion of

'agreement' has no sense here either. For surely the sense of 'agreement' here is dependent upon the sense of 'disagreement'; they are in fact correlatives. However, while the point of logic is correct, this particular attack does not, in any manner or means, help Phillips' case. While one may disagree with the way in which Professor Hick expresses his point, the substance of his argument remains and, in fact, Phillips, in raising this objection to the argument, simply reinforces the critical point Professor Hick is making. It is quite true, what would it be like to disagree about the reality of physical objects? But the same does not hold of God's reality. There disagreement does occur, people do deny the reality of God both as between different religions and within the one religion. Atheism and agnosticism are not unintelligible positions. Perhaps, however, Phillips may respond by claiming that he has not denied the philosophical intelligibility of both atheism and agnosticism - they are both reflections of the claim that religion is found to be meaningless - not denials of the divine reality encapsulated within any particular religion. However, this will not do. What is not in question is the particular philosophical analysis one gives of these phenomena - what it means to be an atheist or an agnostic - but rather the very existence of the phenomena themselves. There is no parallel here with physical object reality - there are no agnostics etc. with reference to physical object reality. Not only can one not be agnostic with regard to the existence of physical objects but, further, as P. Sherry points out,

> "in the case of belief in the reality of the external world there is nothing corresponding

to conversion and loss of faith." (63)

However even allowing that, for the sake of argument, Phillips' parallel does hold here, is there not a danger in the kind of argument he presents, a danger first pinpointed by K. Nielsen? Let me explore this point by examining further what Phillips states in his reply to Hick. He continues:

> "We are familiar with situations where we say, 'This is a tree' ... and so on. Our confidence in saying so is not based on evidence. No; such situations are examples of the kind of thing we mean by talking about physical objects. ... There is no question of justifying the criteria for our use of 'physical object': that is how we do use the concept. The comparison with the reality of God was meant to be at this grammatical level. In each case there would be no question of a general justification of the criteria for distinguishing between the real and the unreal." (64)

Our confidence in our judgements with reference to physical objects is 'not based on evidence', there can be no question of justifying the criteria for our use of 'physical object', indeed no 'general justification of the criteria for distinguishing between the real and the unreal.' Now while one may want to agree with these points, when the reference is to physical object reality, great caution and doubt will surely be expressed when the reference is to divine reality. Can there be no general justification of the criteria for distinguishing between the real and the unreal? If God's reality is the presupposition of 'religious language-games' and 'forms of life', must for example the reality of witches and fairies be

the presupposition of their particular 'language-games' and 'forms of life'? Against this Nielsen claims that, although it was once true, that

> "magic, witchcraft and belief in fairies were 'ongoing practices in our stream of life', they have been rejected as incoherent by people working from the inside."

This is so because, although

> "there was an ongoing form of life in which fairies and witches were taken to be real entities ... gradually, as we reflected on the criteria we actually use for determining whether various entities, including persons, are or are not part of the spatio-temporal world of experience, we came to give up believing in fairies and witches. That a language-game was played, that a form of life existed, did not preclude our asking ... about the reality of what they conceptualised." (65)

Interestingly enough, although it has not been noticed, Phillips has something to say with reference to this problem concerning the reality of fairies. In the course of objecting to a demand for empirical verification with reference to the reality of God, he states:

> "Space does not permit, but it would be interesting to ask whether the reality of ghosts and fairies is a matter for empirical verification, or whether it too is being treated irresponsibly by an objection which asks us to distinguish between talk about the supernatural and its reality." (66)

Well, there is the supernatural and the supernatural, and I suppose if Phillips wants to regard talk of fairies and ghosts a

as on a par with talk of God, on the basis that they are all part of the content of the supernatural, that is his business. One may perhaps feel tempted to advise, what he himself so often advises, that he look again and see the role the respective concepts play in their 'forms of life' and then enquire whether he still wants to say the same. However, a serious objection which Phillips may feel is relevant against Nielsen is that Nielsen seems to suggest that empirical criteria could be deployed to argue for or against the existence of supernatural entities. The validity of the reality referred to in supernatural talk, whether of God or of fairies, cannot be assessed by means of empirical verification, with reference to empirical criteria, for Phillips though. If Phillips, however, were to argue thus, the argument could not be sustained because, as we saw, it is not only supernatural reality which cannot be based on empirical evidence, the same applies to the reality of physical objects, the physical world. Now I think, first of all, in conclusion here, that Phillips' reference to the 'fairy example' at least shows that he considers it a relevant case, a relevant example - he does not dismiss it as an absurd example, as an example which would have no bearing or relevance to the conceptual point he is trying to make. Secondly, when one reflects that (a) we have ceased to believe in the existence of fairies and witches and (b) there do exist people, atheists and agnostics, who refuse to play the 'religious language-game' - a phenomenon not present, for example, in our talk of physical objects - we may well agree with Nielsen that the fact that a 'language-game' is played 'does not preclude our asking about the reality conceptualised in that game'.

Finally, I think there is an even deeper worry or concern with Phillips' analogy or parallel. To ask a question about the reality of the physical world, the reality of physical objects, is, as Phillips claims, a conceptual question given our 'acceptance' that there is a physical world. To ask a question about the reality of God is also a conceptual question given the existence of 'religious language games' and 'forms of life'. Now we are instructed that rather than regarding the question 'Does God exist?' as parallel to the question 'Does this physical object exist?' we should rather regard the question 'What kind of reality is the reality of physical objects?' as being parallel with the question 'What kind of reality is divine reality?' Now my fundamental worry and difficulty with this approach is this. When one talks of the reality of physical objects - when one asks what kind of reality it is - one is inquiring about the reality of tables, desks, chairs etc. It is to ask what it means to affirm or to speak of truth and falsity in the physical world - the world of tables, desks etc. But note, the term 'physical object' functions as a kind of class term which has as its members particulars, such as tables, desks, chairs etc. To talk of physical objects is merely to talk of tables, chairs, etc. - that is what such talk comes to. One cannot encounter, meet, be obstructed by a physical object unless one means one is encountered by, meets, or is obstructed by a table or a chair etc. The reality of God however is very different from this. The term 'God' functions very differently in the language. Indeed the rules governing its application, in the analogy described by Phillips, are very different from those governing the application of the term 'physical object'.

The term 'God' does not function as a class term. One can talk of God without such talk being about something else. One could be said to 'encounter God', 'meet Him', 'experience Him'. In fact, the term 'God' seems to function in the language much more like the term 'table' or 'chair', such that the question of the divine reality seems to be more closely parallel to the question 'Does this particular object exist' rather than the question, 'What kind of reality is the reality of physical objects?' The question as to whether God exists, whether God is real, seems to be more like a question of fact, rather than one requiring merely conceptual elucidation.

What I have just said is very tentative, but if I explain what are the implicit presuppositions behind Phillips' thinking here then I think things will be a little clearer. For Phillips, the common assumption that there is one world, one reality, in which questions of existence can arise must be attacked. Now within this conception of one world, one can ask whether, for example, this particular table exists (i.e. physical object) and whether God exists. Now this common assumption that there is one reality is denied by Phillips; rather there are different concepts of reality - different 'language-games'. There is the 'religious language-game', the 'physical object language-game' etc. Now within the 'physical object language-game' it is intelligible to ask whether a particular object exists, but the general question of whether or not there really are physical objects is not askable within the 'language-game'. Neither can it be asked from outside, for to do so would be to stand within another 'language-game' and question

the reality of another 'language-game' - the physical object one. Rather, the question, whether or not there really are physical objects, is understood as being concerned with the kind of reality found in the physical world and becomes instead a conceptual question requiring an elucidation of the concept of a physical object. Within the 'religious language-game', the question, 'Does God exist?' becomes impossible. The question, 'Does this physical object exist or not' is possible, as we saw, and can be asked within the 'physical object language-game' because (a) before we know what we are being asked some specification must be given as to what physical object one has in mind, i.e. a table, a chair, etc. and (b) within the 'physical object language-game' there are many different physical objects - tables, desks, chairs - the term 'physical object' functioning merely as a class term. Such a function is not open to the term 'God', because to question the existence of God is to question the very existence of that 'language-game' of which the reality of God is a presupposition. Thus, if one wishes to inquire as to the kind of reality talked about here, the proper question, as Phillips sees it, is to inquire as to the kind of reality divine reality is and such an inquiry demands a conceptual elucidation.

However, once one begins to question, as I have already done, whether or not there is any parallel or analogy to be drawn between the 'physical object language-game' and the 'religious language-game', once one begins to plot the role and the significance of such phenomena as atheism, agnosticism, conversion, loss of faith with reference to the 'religious language-game', once one begins to see the fundamentally

'insecure' position the 'religious language-game' has within the 'family of language-games', then the assurance that there is a reality articulated and expressed in the 'religious language-game' begins to evaporate. One begins to see not only the possibility of asking the question, 'Does God exist?' - as opposed to the question 'What kind of reality is divine reality?' - but also the necessity of asking the question. Talk of different realities is not going to save the day here. Given the lack of common acceptance of 'religious language-games', it is this kind of question which requires to be asked, though this, of course, is not to claim that God is just or merely one more object in the world.

Now I can imagine Phillips protesting here; 'Surely you cannot imagine that the question 'What kind of reality is divine reality?' must be neglected and attention be given rather to the question 'Does God exist?', a question paralleled by the further question 'Does this physical object exist?' God is no physical object and if you think so you are guilty of extreme religious insensitivity.' But I have not said that God's reality is in any way like the reality of a physical object. All I have said is that the question 'Does God exist?' is an intelligible one and a question which should be answered. 'God' is not of course the name of a physical object but it must, in some sense, refer to some existent being if we are to claim that the term 'God' refers to any existent reality. 'Well,' Phillips might retort here, 'there are only two points I would like to reiterate. First of all, I have said there can be no question of an empirical verification of God, no question of an empirical identification of God. Questions of

experimentation are irrelevant in this area. Secondly, I did say that 'coming to see that there is a God is not like coming to see that an additional being exists' - that would extend 'one's knowledge of the facts but not one's understanding'. Rather, to discover that belief in God is meaningful is to discover a 'universe of discourse that one has been unaware of'. 'To have the idea of God is to know God.' 'To know how to use this language (religious) is to know God.'' I would like now to explore the issues raised by these last two comments. First of all, in the next section, I would like to explore Phillips' arguments with reference to the question of identification as it applies to the term 'God'. Secondly, in the section following, I would like to explore Phillips' arguments as to exactly what is meant when it is claimed that 'to know how to use religious language is to know God'.

iii

THE PROBLEM OF IDENTIFICATION

First of all, let us try and see what the particular problem or issue is here. Nielsen expounds what is at issue here in the following way:

> "At issue here is whether the putative referring expression 'God' actually applies to anything. Recall that the God of the Judaeo-Christian tradition is said to be an 'individual, yet everything else is dependent on him, infinite, though no part of the universe, but still transcendent to the universe while at the same time remaining the saviour and redeemer of all men.' Given these very extraordinary defining characteristics, extraordinarily conjoined, there is ... no escaping the question: 'How could we identify the Being so specified?' How could we, for example, identify an absolutely independent being? Given such a response to the question 'What is this God?' the question of identification becomes acute." (67)

That is, the term 'God' functions in the language as a 'putative referring expression' and the problem is, given the 'defining characteristics' normally stated, how <u>can</u> or could the <u>referent</u> of the term be identified? Now this problem is crucial, because, as Flew points out:

> "Until and unless this can be answered, there can be no question of existence or of non-existence: because there has been no proper account of what it would be for him to be or not to be; of what, in short, he would be." (68)

Indeed, given that the word 'God' appears to be a referring

expression functioning within the context of Christian belief and language and referring to, or standing for, some kind of entity or individual, we do seem to be faced with a difficult problem of identification. As, for example, Professor Hepburn states:

> "If God is to retain the status of individual which some parts of Christian discourse undoubtedly accord him, we need not only a role in the language for 'God', like a set of rules for the King in chess, but also an intelligible procedure for referring to God, a set of criteria for identifying him. And this is a demand of logic ..." (69)

The problem is, as Flew reminds us,

> "... does or could the word God apply to any object ... 'Does, or could, this term God have application?'" (70)

It may well be true, as Durrant has pointed out, that

> "it is not possible to offer a coherent account of the logical status of 'God' as an item of Christian language as a whole, since 'God' exhibits differing and indeed incompatible status - in short that 'God' exhibits radically incompatible logics." (71)

Durrant came to this conclusion by critically examining the role or roles the term 'God' has in religious language; i.e. whether the term 'God', as an item of religious language, is a proper name, a definite description or whatever. For Durrant

> "any attempt to set out a scheme in which 'God' has a single logical status ... is doomed to failure. No such scheme can cope with the manifold and inconsistent logic of 'God'." (72)

As I said, Durrant's conclusions with regard to this 'quasi-

syntactic question' (73) may well be correct - but space does not permit an examination of these issues here - and, if correct, they would pose a serious difficulty or embarrassment to any philosopher committed to upholding the possibility of offering a coherent account of the logical status of 'God' within, in particular, Christian 'language-games'. However, let us assume that a coherent role can be given to the term 'God' whether as a proper name, a definite description or whatever within Christian language and let us further, briefly, explore the problem of identification as already illustrated.

Within traditional Christian belief it is assumed that God is a transcendent being. Now to say that God is a transcendent being is to claim that God 'exists' apart from the universe, 'above' material existence. It is also, I believe, to claim that God exists outside of what is perceived or presented in experience. Indeed the descriptions that are presented as uniquely characterising God, such as 'a necessary being', are such that it seems impossible in principle for anyone to claim to know what it would be like to refer to and identify such a being; and thus there is a lack of identifying reference. To claim that God is a transcendent being seems to come very close to claiming that God is beyond comprehension. Indeed, if God is a being transcendent to the universe, it would seem that, as a matter of logic, he cannot be literally perceived, encountered or observed. To understand the term 'transcendent being' is to realise that there logically cannot be any method by which one can identify that to which it allegedly refers. Indeed isn't this where the problem is most acute? If one stresses the transcendence of divine existence,

stresses the wholly otherness of God from the world, one is not merely referring to the quality or kind of existence enjoyed by God, but also referring to the wholly otherness of God's nature and of the attributes that one can predicate of Him, such that God seems to be beyond comprehension.

Traditional Christian theology, however, seems to require that God be thought of as in some sense an entity, an individual, but this further entails that we must have displayed how "what is specified in our definition of the word 'God' could in principle be identified." (74) And this is the problem. God is omnipotent, omniscient, all loving, creator of the world but what could it mean to identify the referent here? As Nielsen states:

> "we must have some idea of what it would be like for 'God' actually to make reference or fail to make reference. But this is just our puzzlement. We seem to have no way of identifying the referent of 'God'." (75)

And this is surely a difficulty for Christian belief or thought. For God is there described as being in some sense a transcendent entity or individual, a Being who can in some sense be encountered, of whom one can be aware of being in His presence, who can be met with, talked to etc.. And yet, it would seem that there is no way one can, even in principle, specify criteria of identification to enable the referent of the term 'God' to be identified.

How would Phillips respond to such reasoning? I suspect his argument would go something like this. 'Well, now it is really spelt out. When you claimed, in your last section, that God must be thought of as in some sense an entity, an object,

although not a physical object - and now we hear that this means he must be thought of as a kind of transcendent object, entity or individual - my objection to this was that this was to conceive of God as an object, an 'existent among existents'. Now, however, we are told there is some peculiar difficulty for Christian belief in that God, in fact, is thought of as a transcendent Being - an entity or individual in that sense - but, given such a conception, there are in principle no criteria for identifying the referent of the term 'God'. But let us look at the kind of criteria you have in mind. You have referred to Nielsen's work on this topic; well, let me present you again with a sample quote, already illustrated, from Nielsen. When discussing the reasons why belief in fairies and witches have been given up, Nielsen claims: '... as we reflect on the criteria we use for determining whether various entities, including persons, are or are not part of the spatio-temporal world of experience, we came to give up believing in fairies and witches.' Now couldn't it be objected here that if Nielsen thinks, from the use of this example, that there is <u>any</u> parallel or analogy with the question of the reality of God, then he is simply exhibiting the error of conceiving of God's reality as in some way akin to the reality of persons or objects. Indeed isn't this the problem with the argument here? What is required or demanded for identification - the identificatory criteria one has in mind here - of the alleged referring term 'God' are essentially <u>empirical</u> criteria. One is, in a sense, demanding that what is referred to by the referring term 'God' be in some sense <u>empirically identifiable</u>. One demands an empirical identification of the object of God-talk. Further, one finds

that as God, within traditional Christian thought, is thought of as transcendent, as 'wholly other from the world', it is impossible in principle to specify such criteria. One then concludes that there is some difficulty or problem here for Christian belief. Why should one draw this conclusion?

If it is the case, as I believe, that God is thought of, and thought of quite rightly, within Christian belief as transcendent to the world, as 'other than the world', why, rather than imposing criteria of identification which it is impossible in principle to meet in this situation, should one not explore more fully what is meant, within religious talk, by God's 'otherness from the world', by his reality? Why not explore, from within the language (religious), what is meant by talk of God's reality rather than imposing alien criteria from without - criteria which not only presuppose there could be an empirical identification of God but also demand it as necessary, if the alleged referring expression 'God' is to function adequately in the language. Indeed as R. F. Holland states: "... what could entitle any experience to be called an experience of God?" (76) Or as R. Rhees maintains: "you cannot have experience of that." (77)

Indeed the question here is crucial, because haven't I said that the question of how one "would decide the identity of God is connected in many ways with what it means to talk of divine reality." (78) And to explore this question one has to see the "internal relation of theology to religion and the religious tradition as the means of identifying God." (79) Let me expound this in two ways.

"One cannot have religion without religious dis-

course. This is taught to children through stories by which they become acquainted with the attributes of God. As a result of this teaching the child forms an idea of God. We have far less idea than we sometimes suppose of what the nature of the child's idea is, but for our purposes its content is irrelevant. What is relevant to note is that the child does not listen to the stories, observe religious practices, reflect on all this, and then form an idea of God out of the experience. The idea of God is being formed in the actual story-telling and religious services. To ask which came first, the story telling or the idea of God, is to ask a senseless question." (80)

It is in contexts like this that the kind of reality which God has is taught and learnt. It is here too, in such contexts, that one learns to identify God. Further, consider this:

"If there is a disagreement over whether two persons are talking about the same third person, there are, in principle at least, ways of removing the doubt. But the identity of God is not like the identity of a human being. To say that one worships the same God as someone else is not to point to the same object, or be confronted by it. How did Paul, for example, know that the God he was worshipping was the God of Abraham? What enabled him to say this was not an empirical method of verification as in the case of two astronomers who wonder whether they are talking of the same star. What enabled Paul to say that he worshipped the God of Abraham was the fact that, despite the many changes which had taken place in the concept of God, he and Abraham stood in a common religious tradition. To say that a god is not the same as one's own

> God involves saying that those who believe in him are in a radically different religious tradition from one's own." (81)

Or as Rhees states:

> "Questions about 'meaning the same' in connexion with the names of physical objects are connected with the kind of criteria to which we may appeal in saying that this is the same object - 'that is the same planet as I saw in the south last night', ... Supposing someone said 'The word "God" stands for a different object now.' What could that mean? ... Consider the way in which we learn the meaning of 'God'. It is not by having someone point and say 'That's God'. Now this is not a trivial or inessential matter. It hangs together in very important ways with what I call the grammar of the word 'God'. And it is one reason why I do not think it is helpful just to say that the word is a substantive." (82)

With this I would concur for haven't I said "God has no biography." (83) '

How can one respond to such arguments and conclusions? In an important sense it seems to me Phillips has missed the point of the earlier criticisms or, I suspect, not so much missed the point as <u>deflected</u> the problem and difficulties involved into another problem and difficulty. And the suggestion is that the answer or response given to this latter problem will somehow serve as an adequate answer or response to the original problem. However, before articulating my reasoning here in detail, let me explore, first of all, Phillips' reference to, understanding of and use of the concept of a religious tradition.

Paul knew that he worshipped the same God as Abraham because they both stood in a common religious tradition - a tradition which still retained its identity despite the many changes 'which had taken place in the concept of God'. And I presume,by parity of reasoning,it could be argued that a Christian believer today could say that he worshipped the same God as Abraham and Paul because they all three stood in a common religious tradition - and this despite changes in the concept of God. Thus in this context the notion of a common religious tradition is crucial,for it is by reference to the tradition, what is involved in belonging to a tradition, despite changes in the concept of God which occur over time, that one is enabled to identify the God worshipped as the same God.

Consider however this example of Phillips':

> "If a man said that God had told him to sacrifice his son, no matter how much he tried to convince us, we should not be prepared to say that this was the will of God. ... What if the man replied to us by saying, 'If God can ask a father to sacrifice his son once, why cannot He do so again?' If God asked Abraham to sacrifice his son, why cannot He ask this of our next-door neighbour? The first matter to question is whether God is asking for the same thing in the two instances. It is confused to assume that what God did in asking Abraham to sacrifice his son, is the same as what He would be doing in asking our next door neighbour to sacrifice his son. What Abraham did can only be understood, if understood at all today, by reference to the community of his day, the religious nature of the family, Abraham's position in the tribe, and,

> of course, the practice of child sacrifice itself. These factors are not incidental to the action, but give it its meaning. That is why in saying that God could not ask anyone today to sacrifice his son the 'could not' is a logical 'could not'. It is not as if God could, but chooses not to, but that we should not know what it would mean for God to ask anyone to sacrifice his child. ... What can conceivably be said to be the will of God is determined by prevailing beliefs about God. In short, God's nature is the grammar of God's will." (84)

Prevailing beliefs about God (which can of course, Phillips has warned us, change over time) determine God's will (shouldn't this be our concept of God's will) or what can be said to be God's will. Further, as God's nature is the grammar of God's will, it would seem that what is identified as God's nature is determined by prevailing beliefs about God. But in what sense do these prevailing beliefs about God determine what can or cannot be said to be the will of God? They do this in the sense that whatever is said to be the will of God only gains intelligibility when seen against the background of these prevailing beliefs. And these 'prevailing beliefs' themselves only gain intelligibility when they are seen as functions of certain prevailing sociological and institutional frameworks, i.e. the notion of community, tribe, the practice of child sacrifice. It is the existence of these institutions, and the beliefs about God which are developed and nurtured within them, that give requests and actions, based on such beliefs, their very intelligibility. That is why saying that God could not ask anyone today to sacrifice his son, the 'could

not' is a logical 'could not'.' Divorce this context from the belief and one would not even know what it 'meant for God to ask anyone to sacrifice his child.' However, if this is true, if it is only by reference to a certain institutional and sociological framework, which provides an intelligible context for prevailing beliefs about God - God's nature being determined by prevailing beliefs about God - then what kind of sense and content can we give to the claim that Abraham and, for example, a Christian believer living to-day share a common religious tradition? Indeed what sense can be given here to the very idea of a common religious tradition? Further and more fundamentally, what sense can even be given to talk of a religious tradition?

However let us assume that Phillips can provide an intelligible context for the use of the term 'religious tradition'. Can he justifiably employ this notion to answer the particular problem of divine identification which I set out at the beginning of this section? I have already suggested that Phillips has tried to deflect the problems and difficulties involved here into another problem and difficulty, with the suggestion that the answer or response, given to the latter problem, will serve as an adequate answer or response to the original problem. The problem of identification as Phillips sees it, is how one could identify the God of Abraham as being the same God as the God of Paul. And he quite rightly points out that religious believers do determine whether or not they are talking about the same God by reference to the question of whether or not they share in a common religious tradition. No question of pointing to the same 'object' is involved as there well might be, in fact could be, if two people are disputing

whether a person they are talking about is the same person. Now this is true as far as it goes but it certainly does not go so far as to take seriously, and provide an answer to, the original problem of what would constitute the making of an identificatory reference within a religious context. What was at issue in our original problem was whether the 'putative referring expression' 'God', the subject of religious discourse, actually does or even could apply to any reality? Given our understanding of the term 'God', how could the referent of the term be identified? What would count as a referent for the term, how could we even understand what identifying reference 'God' makes or what any possible referent of the term 'God' would be like? To be told (a) that one establishes whether or not the same God is being worshipped by looking and seeing whether a common religious tradition is involved and (b) that what is involved in identifying God is learnt by participating in religious practices, learning stories, sharing in religious services, is simply to ignore or sidestep the issue of ontological reference and, more fundamentally, whether ontological reference is at all possible. As we saw Professor Hepburn claim, we need not only a role in the language for 'God' but also some hint of a procedure for how God is to be referred to, if the term 'God' is to refer to some kind of reality or existent. Does, or indeed could, the term 'God' really stand for or refer to any kind of reality or existent individual?

And here of course is the nub of the difficulty. 'Well of course,' I could imagine Phillips replying, 'if you want to persist in seeing God as some kind of existent or individual,

some kind of object or reality in your sense of the term, then you are going to be left with the difficulties and doubts you have suggested. Of course you will then find my accounts inadequate.' But it is not simply my persistence in seeing God as some kind of individual that is at stake; surely it is traditional Christian belief which accords God the status of an individual, an entity of some sort? 'But,' Phillips might retort, 'your difficulty only arises because you pay too much attention to the 'surface grammar' of such belief and not enough to the 'depth grammar'. Look and see the role expressions of belief in God play in the lives of believers. There you will see that God is thought of as eternal, not as an existent being. (85) Don't stipulate, look and see. Furthermore, with reference to your comments on God's transcendence or the conception of God as a transcendent Being, I have said, quoting approvingly from Marcel, that

> "not only does the word 'transcendent' not mean 'transcending experience', but on the contrary there must exist a possibility of having an experience of the transcendent as such, and unless that possibility exists the word can have no meaning." (86)

God is 'other than the world' but his 'otherness from the world' does not refer to his existing as some kind of entity or individual who 'dwells' in some transcendent realm.'

It is obvious then that we shall have to explore what Phillips means here by God being 'other than the world', what it means to have an experience of the transcendent as such, and this I will examine in section (v). Before examining this, however, I want to turn, as already promised, to examine, among

other claims, Phillips' remark 'that to know how to use religious language is to know God.'

iv

LANGUAGE, WORSHIP, BELIEF, UNDERSTANDING AND LOVE

For Phillips, as we have seen, 'coming to see that there is a God is not like coming to see that an additional being exists.' This is so because, if God were an 'additional being', there would be an extension of one's knowledge of facts, but no extension of one's understanding. Rather, for Phillips, 'to have the idea of God is to know God' and this phrase finds its proper expression in the further claim that to discover that 'belief in God is meaningful' is to 'discover that there is a universe of discourse one has been unaware of'. And, not only is it the case that the discovery of such a universe of discourse constitutes what it means to find belief in God meaningful, but, further 'to know how to use this language (religious) is to know God'.

Phillips himself comments on this last claim in the following passage:

> "I was referring there to the way in which religion is taught, the way we come to see what is meant by God, through stories, pictures etc. ... It might be said that when children form conceptions of God they have a primitive theology which determines what can and what cannot be said about God. The theology is implicit in religious language. ... When I said that 'to know how to use this language is to know God' I was referring to the language of worship, contemplation and religious practices. To use this language is to worship, to believe in God." (87)

Or as Rhees says: "To know God is to worship him" (88) and

Holland,too,echoes this sentiment when he claims, "the knowledge of God is related to the love of God." (89)

But surely to use religious language as a participant or know how to use it is to make either explicitly or implicitly a claim to know God,not to know God? To use religious language may involve worshipping, expressing one's love of God, but does God, the object of the religious response or attitudes really exist? Surely this question is at least an intelligible one and indeed a possible one here? For Phillips,however, one of the cardinal mistakes of philosophers,who discuss the question of God's alleged existence or non-existence,is that they assume that "the meaning of worship is contingently related to the question whether there is a God or not." (90) That is, those philosophers who, in searching for reasons to believe in God, assume that

> "one could settle the question of whether there is a God or not without referring to the form of life of which belief in God is a fundamental part." (91)

Rather,in

> "learning by contemplation, attention, renunciation, what forgiving, thanking, loving etc. mean in these contexts, the believer is participating in the reality of God; this is what we mean by God's reality." (92)

The 'believer is participating in the reality of God'. This is what 'we mean by God's reality'! In learning in a religious context,and by 'religious means', what it means to love, thank and forgive in religion is to participate in the reality of God! It may be to participate in religious

practices, it may be to understand what particular nuances of meaning are given to particular terms in a religious context, but it most certainly is not to participate in the reality of God as normally understood. And, furthermore, it is most certainly not what Christian religious believers mean by God's reality. If this is what Phillips means by God's reality it is perhaps not surprising that he displays such little concern as to how referential expressions, within religious discourse, are to be understood. However, for Phillips,

> "once philosophers begin to ignore religious criteria of meaningfulness .. an unbridgeable logical gap is opened up between religious experience, worship and religious discourse on the one hand and the reality of God on the other." (93)

One is tempted to reply here that the 'unbridgeable gap' only disappears because religious criteria of meaningfulness, as understood by Phillips, identify the reality of God with what it means to take part in the religious 'form of life'. The gap is closed, not by providing a new or better bridge, but by denying the existence of the gap in the first place.

For Phillips, however, there can be no "theoretical knowledge of God ... The man who contrues religious belief as a theoretical affair distorts it," (94) and this is so because "belief, understanding and love can all be equated with each other in this context." (95) Note, however, that this last comment is in fact an elucidation of an earlier remark which reads, "To know God is to love Him, and the understanding which such knowledge brings is the understanding of love." (96) It is impossible then for someone to 'know God' without at the

same time 'loving God'; (loving God is then a necessary(?)condition for knowing God-/but how can one love that which one does not know?). There can be no theoretical, non-affective, knowledge of God, but is it the case that 'the understanding which such knowledge brings is the understanding of love.'? One would have thought that the knowledge which such understanding brought would be an understanding of, or knowledge of, God. Unless, of course, Phillips means to suggest that the two terms here, 'God' and 'love', are synonyms, identical in meaning.

Having, however, 'equated' belief, understanding and love in the religious context and particularly belief and understanding, Phillips feels called upon to give some account of what it could or would mean to reject religious belief. This is particularly necessary as, just prior to the above comments, Phillips has claimed that "one cannot understand what praising, confessing, thanking, or asking mean in worship apart from belief in an eternal God." (97) That is, it seems to be a necessary and sufficient condition of understanding religious practices or concepts that one actually 'believe in them', in the sense that one actively participate in the religious 'form of life' within which such practices and concepts have their intelligibility. What in fact is the particular problem of rejection involved here?

In a nutshell the problem here seems to be that if it is a necessary, and indeed sufficient, condition of understanding religious beliefs and concepts that one actually believe them - that one actually be a religious believer - how then can one account for the phenomenon of rejection? People do seem to

reject religious belief and give reasons for doing so and yet, if it is the case that one can only understand religious beliefs and concepts if one is an actual religious believer, rejecting religious belief must be understood as rejecting that which, as a non-believer, one does not understand. The problem becomes particularly acute when the alleged rejection is made by a believer, or rather ex-believer. Someone is a religious believer, prays, thanks and worships God generally and then comes to reject his belief. He no longer believes. What can be said here? It seems that two possibilities present themselves, neither of which is satisfactory. First of all, it could be held that while a believer he understood religious concepts and beliefs but now that he is a non-believer he no longer understands them. But this account would seem strange, if not paradoxical, especially if his expression of his past beliefs are the same and he can still talk to believers about the nature and content of their beliefs. Secondly, it could be maintained that as the ex-believer has now 'rejected' religious belief this in itself is a clear sign that he never really understood religious beliefs and concepts in the first place; indeed he never really was a believer. This is so despite the fact that what he says about his past beliefs is still the same.

If this is the problem how does Phillips respond to it? Well, he believes that an account can be given of what it means to reject religious belief which is compatible with holding that a religious understanding of religious beliefs and concepts requires an identification of understanding and believing. He presents his argument, and an example, in the following way.

> "To begin with, there is a perfectly natural use of the word rejection which is connected with the inability of the person who rejects to make any sense of what is rejected. I can see no objection to saying that the man who says that religion means nothing to him rejects the claims of religion on his life. Apparently, when Oscar Wilde was accused of blasphemy during his trial, he replied 'Sir, blasphemy is a word I never use'. Wilde is rejecting a certain way of talking. Similarly, the man who says, 'Religion is mumbo-jumbo as far as I am concerned,' is making a wholesale rejection of a way of talking or a way of life. That way of talking and that way of life mean nothing to him, but this does not mean that he cannot reject them." (98)

I presume Phillips has a similar account of rejection in mind when he also states,

> "to no longer believe in God is not to disbelieve one thing among many of the same kind, but to see no sense in anything of that kind. What has become meaningless is not some feature of a form of life, but a form of life as such." (99)

And, as we have seen, atheism and agnosticism, for Phillips, are best classified and thought of as respectively, a claim that religion is meaningless, or doubts as to whether religion means anything.

Let us however look closer at Phillips' argument here with especial reference to the 'Wilde example'. One can reject that which makes no sense. It would seem that a necessary condition of such rejection is that that, which is rejected, makes sense. A man can reject religion because religion 'means nothing to him'. Well, yes, I can see a point in

talking like this if by 'meaning nothing to him' one means that the man can see no point, purpose or significance in religious belief or practice; in that sense the beliefs of religion may be meaningless. But surely a necessary condition of rejecting such a belief as meaningless, in this sense, is that one can understand the words and sentences used to express the belief; one can understand the sentences in which the beliefs are expressed and thus the beliefs are meaningful in this sense. Astrology, I may dismiss as meaningless or mumbo-jumbo, but surely in so rejecting astrology, I do not claim that the sentences which comprise 'astrology language' are literally meaningless. Surely I am claiming that I cannot see the point of, or the significance of, astrology. It is, if you like meaningless or mumbo-jumbo in this sense because it portends so much and yet is so practically useless. Indeed a necessary condition of my judgement, that I see no point in it, being possible, is that I understand what is claimed for it. Surely in the case of Wilde it is stretching the imagination being asked to believe that when Wilde says, 'Blasphemy is a word I never use', he means, I do not know what the word means. Surely in the case of Wilde it is because he understands religious concepts and terms, finds them meaningful in this sense, that he can claim, as he most certainly seems to be doing, that he can see no point or significance in using or applying religious terms and concepts? To say a way of talking, a way of life 'means nothing' is surely to claim, in this context, that one can see no point or purpose in participating in such a way of life; the way of life is meaningless in this sense. This is, however, very different from claiming that the words

and sentences deployed in that way of life are meaningless.

Another problem which faces Phillips in this context, where belief and understanding are identified, is how can one provide an intelligible account of, what Phillips himself terms, 'seeking for God'? "That is if one must believe before one can know God how can one know that it is God one is seeking for?" (100) Let me expound again, very briefly, what the exact problem is here.

One can only intelligibly be described as seeking for something - in this particular case God - if one already knows <u>that</u> which one is seeking for. I cannot be said to be seeking for, for example, my pen, unless (a) I know what a pen is, (b) I know the particular characteristics of my pen. I must be able to give a <u>description</u> of that for which I am seeking before I can be intelligibly said to be seeking for it. But if it is the case, as in the religious example, that I can only understand what it is I am seeking for when I have actually discovered it - when I am a believer - then how can an intelligible account be given of my seeking for God? I either believe and know God, or, I do not believe and do not know God. I either believe and thus understand what it means to know God, understand what the word 'God' means, or I do not believe and thus do not understand what it means to know God, do not understand what the word 'God' means. A half-way house position seems impossible.

Phillips responds to the problem in this way:

> "The answer to this difficulty has been given by Pascal: 'Comfort yourself, you would not seek me if you had not found me.' One must not think of belief in God as an all or nothing affair."

(One is tempted to interject here that it is not the objector who is thinking of belief in God as an all of nothing affair; this way of thinking seems to be imposed by Phillips' own ideas on the nature of belief and understanding in religion. However, to continue with Phillips' reply:)

> "Whether the love of God means anything in a man's life can be assessed, not simply by his attainments, but also by his aspirations. So even if a man does not actually love God, his understanding of what it means to love God can be shown by his aspirations towards such love." (101)

One's understanding of what it means to love God can be displayed by one's aspirations towards such love! But how does this solve the problem? How could one's understanding of what it means to love God take place outside a context of belief in God? How can one aspire towards that, i.e. love, which one does not understand? What could it mean to aspire to something here? This is the problem, and to elude the difficulties here it seems that one must either admit that no account can be given of 'seeking for God' or do as Phillips seems to be tending to do, which is, in effect, to deny the identification of belief and understanding in this context. Further, note an interesting move made in Phillips' argument. He begins by talking about the problem of whether 'the love of God means anything in a man's life'. Now to talk in this way is not to talk about what the words 'love' and 'God' mean, but to talk about the significance or point of the love of God in the life of a man. It is to inquire of the significance of God's love in the life of a man, how meaningful it is, in this

sense. But to talk of the love of God in this sense is very different from the question or problem which is involved in understanding 'what it means to love God'. I can, or could be said to, know what it means to love God - know the meaning of the words and the sentences used to express them - without the love of God meaning anything to me, i.e. having any point or significance in my life. Now Phillips seems to move from talking about the meaning of the love of God in the sense of its significance or point to talking about what it means to love God in the sense of understanding what the words and sentences mean. Given the context of the problem, the issue being dealt with should be how it is possible, given the identification of belief and understanding, for someone, who is not a believer, to aspire to the love of God when he can only understand what the words mean from within the context of belief. Thus it is unjustifiable for Phillips to confuse or conflate what the 'love of God means in a man's life', a question about the significance and point, the meaningfulness in this sense of a belief, with the question of the understanding involved in knowing 'what it means to love God', a question about the meaning of words and the sentences used to express them. (102)

Now in examining Phillips' arguments with reference to the problems posed by his identification of belief and understanding in religion, i.e. his attempts to give an intelligible account within this context of what it would or could mean to 'reject' religious beliefs or to 'seek God', we have noticed that there appears to be a similar conflation in both arguments of two different senses of meaning: that is, what is involved in a word or sentence having meaning and what is

involved in finding a belief, set of beliefs or practice meaningful -seeing its or their point or significance. Now the distinction here is an important one to make but it is not a new or difficult distinction to grasp, and it is difficult to believe that a philosopher of Phillips' competence should so easily conflate these two senses of 'meaning'. I know that the concept of meaning can be difficult to handle, given the fact that in the English language there exists simply one term to express different senses or applications of the concept, and, indeed, with reference to Phillips' work, one could wish that the concept of meaning was more carefully deployed, given that it can have many different applications and that many different senses of 'meaning' can be involved. However despite this, there still lurks the suspicion, in my mind at least, that the critical comments I have made with reference to Phillips' conflation of the two senses of 'meaning' may simply reflect the fact that I have missed the significance of the point Phillips was making, or indeed that he may have had some other particular point or points in mind. Indeed my suspicions are confirmed when, in reply to the objection that he <u>has</u> identified belief and understanding in the sense that I attributed to him, ('that only believers can understand the statements made and the concepts involved in professions of religious belief'), he <u>appears</u> to deny that he ever did make such an identification. I say <u>appears</u> because the distinction which is crucial for him in this context - the distinction between philosophical and religious understanding - is applied in a rather strange and annoying way.

As we saw, Phillips appears to require an identification

of belief and understanding. Now this seems to entail that only a believer 'could understand the statements made and the concepts involved in professions of religious belief.' That a religious understanding of religious concepts and statements is only open to a believer. However, Phillips only considers two possibilities in his discussion of the problem, i.e. whether he has said a religious believer can have a philosophical understanding of religious concepts or whether he has said only philosophers who are religious believers can understand anything about religious beliefs. (103) He concludes, quite correctly, that he has not said this. However what is at issue, to repeat, is whether only a believer can have a religious understanding of religious beliefs and concepts and to this question, or problem, Phillips provides no enlightenment. One suspects the issue or problem has in a way been deflected or side-stepped. However I want to leave this problem for the moment but I shall return to examine the issue in detail later.

However, for Phillips, a major problem which he feels he is faced with, if one identifies understanding and belief in religion, (however one understand the identification involved), is to account for the phenomenon of the 'religious' rebel. Here we are concerned not with 'the rejection of religion as meaningless', but with 'rebellion against God'. How can one rebel against God and still be counted a believer such that one can be said to understand that against which one is rebelling? It seems impossible to be identified as a believer and a rebel at one and the same time, and even more impossible when one remembers, for Phillips, that 'belief, understanding and

love must be identified in religion'. In reply to this Phillips refers us to a passage from Camus (104)

> "The rebel defies more than he denies. Originally, at least, he does not deny God, he simply talks to Him as an equal. But it is not a polite dialogue. It is a polemic animated by the desire to conquer." (105)

First of all, how can Phillips square this account with his claims (a) that 'to know God is to love him' and (b) that 'belief, understanding and love can all be equated in religion'? Phillips himself is aware that some modification of his thesis is called for but insists that what is not called for is a "denial of the identification of belief and understanding in religion". (106) Rather, we are referred to the writings of Malcolm, and in particular Malcolm's claim that belief in God can

> "encompass not only trust, but also awe, dread ... and perhaps even hatred. Belief in God will involve some affective state or attitude ... and these attitudes could vary from reverential love to rebellious rejection." (107)

What then are the conclusions we can draw from this? Obviously the assertion that 'to know God is to love him' is false - not everyone who believes in God loves him. Furthermore, it cannot be the case that 'belief, understanding and love' can all be equated in religion and, most important of all, as Phillips himself admits, "belief in God need not entail a worshipful attitude on the part of the believer." (108) This last point is especially important considering, as we have seen, in particular both Phillips' and Rhees' insistence that religious language, in which is discovered

the reality of God, has its use in worship, and their subsequent criticisms of those philosophers who assumed that 'the meaning of worship is contingently related to the question of God's existence'.

Our rebel, whether he likes it or not is, for Phillips, a religious believer - he believes in God. (109) "The community of believers is wider than the community of worshippers." (110) For Phillips,

> "the rebel must see the kind of relationship God asks of the believer before he can reject and defy it. He sees the story from the inside, but it is not a story that captivates him. The love of God is active in his life, but in him it evokes hatred. To say that he does not believe in God is absurd, for whom does he hate if not God?" (111)

It may be thought that to include rebellious rejection as expressive of a belief in God, simply to retain the identification of belief and understanding in religion, is rather silly. But when one hears that atheism and agnosticism (earlier described as essentially involving the claim that 'religion is meaningless') must also be considered "religious phenomena",(112) one wonders if a consistent and intelligible thesis is being presented at all.

Finally, and very briefly, it would seem, to take a charitable view of things, that for Phillips the primary, indeed the only legitimate affirmation of God's existence is that made from within the 'religious form of life'. This affirmation can only intelligibly be made by believers - in Phillips' sense of the term - those who respond with 'passion

in their souls'. As Phillips states:

> "I believe that Kierkegaard says somewhere that in relation to God there are only lovers - happy or unhappy - but lovers. The unhappy or unruly lover has an understanding of what it means to believe in God as well as the happy lover." (113)

An acceptance of this view would exclude, as we saw, any claims that there can be 'theoretical knowledge of God' or any "external reasons (reasons outside the 'form of life') for believing in God." (114) Can we rest content with this account?

It seems to me that there can be such 'theoretical knowledge of God', that one can intelligibly describe what such a belief would be like. It may be true that for someone to affirm God's existence, really believe that God exists, and not be touched in an affective manner would strike us as odd. 'But do you really believe in God?' may seem an appropriate question. But note/what would be in question would be the sincerity, the rationality of the belief, not the intelligibility of the belief itself. As B. Mitchell states:

> "To believe that there is a God (who is to be worshipped) is not in itself to worship. A man who claimed to believe in God and did not worship him could be criticised as insincere or hypocritical or irrational or in some way defective in his attitude; but it would not follow that he did not believe in God, at least in the minimal sense of believing that there is a God." (115)

And yet would this meet the point being made by Phillips? For him it is only individuals with 'passion in their souls' who can have an understanding of what it means to affirm or

enquire after God's existence. The question, 'Does God exist?' asked dispassionately would be unintelligible. But surely even if we allow that for a religious believer, one who actively participates in religious life, there can be no question of a non-affective belief in God,this does not entail (a) that no 'theoretical knowledge' of God is possible or (b) that no question of the validity of the affirmation of God's existence made by the believer can arise. Surely this is, as W. D. Hudson has shown,to "confuse a necessary condition of religious belief with a sufficient condition of it." (116) It is to claim that the affective responses somehow 'validate' the object of the belief, that they in fact constitute the belief, and this is absurd.

V

METAPHYSICAL ATHEISM

What then does it mean to talk of divine reality? How is this reality constituted? Well, Phillips might reply, as already seen, 'in learning by contemplation, attention etc. ... what forgiving, thanking, loving etc. mean in these contexts ('religious forms of life') one participates in God's reality; this is what we mean by God's reality.' But can one rest content with an account of the divine reality which does not illustrate or demonstrate God's transcendence from the world, God's complete 'otherness from the world', His creation? 'Of course not,' Phillips might reply, 'haven't I said that one can have an 'experience' of the transcendent, that there is a sense in which God is 'other than' the world,but in this context it depends very much on what you mean by God's otherness, His transcendence. And in particular it depends very much on whether you have a 'naturalistic' or a 'supernaturalistic' concept of God in mind.' As Phillips states:

> "What surprises me is that so many Christian philosophers (and I presume he also intends this point to apply to atheistical philosophers too) seem to be talking about a natural, as opposed to a supernatural God; a God who is an existent among existents, and an agent among agents." (117)

Indeed,for Phillips,the demand for a 'naturalistic' conception of God expresses itself in

> "the hankering after the old spatial model, in terms of which God's reality is likened to the externality of the planets." (118)

Or again:

> "The model they (the naturalists) wish to retain is that of an anthropomorphic conception of God, a God whom one could address as one could address the moon - or better - the man in the moon." (119)

To say that, for Phillips, God is 'other than the world' or that indeed God created the world "would not be to put forward a theory, hypothesis or explanation of the world." (120) The dependence of the world on God "is not logical or causal, but religious dependence." (121) But how is 'religious dependence' to be understood?

Specifically Phillips develops his answer to this question in a critique he deploys of Cosmological Arguments for the existence of God, as they are normally understood. This seems a plausible way to proceed because Cosmological Arguments, normally understood, are attempts to demonstrate the existence of God <u>from</u> the existence of the world. The arguments seek a transcendent explanation: they attempt to account for the existence of the world by reference to something other than the world - i.e. God. Phillips further hopes in his critique to point to, at least, one way we should regard the matter (other than normal interpretations) if we desire to ascertain what might be meant by claiming that 'God is other than the world.' Let us examine his argument.

Phillips' major difficulty with Cosmological Arguments centres on the notion of what it could mean to claim that God is the explanation of <u>everything</u> there is. He states:

> "If we say that 'everything' may cease to exist, we seem to be assuming that the world can be regarded as a thing or as a class of things.

> One of the difficulties of thinking of the world as a class of things has to do with the criteria by which we determine whether things belong to a particular class or not. ... But there are no common criteria to determine what is to count as belonging to the world. 'Everything' is not a class of things. This conclusion is underlined by noting that the notion of class entails the notion of a limit, and a distinction between things inside and outside the limit. But when we speak of things being in the world, we do not mean to contrast them with other things which are outside the world. If we ask whether there are certain things in the world, is not this another way of asking whether these things are real? But if inclusion in the world were akin to inclusion in a class, we should have to assume that certain things do or could exist outside the world, which would amount to saying that unreal things do or could exist." (122)

This argument seems conclusive and fair enough, and Phillips continues in similar vein.

> "Any object or group of objects is individuated against a background of other objects. But against what background do we individuate the world? If 'everything' is thought to be a thing, we cannot answer the question, '<u>This</u> thing as distinct from what?'" (123)

The point here is indeed reminiscent of earlier difficulties that we have discussed,only then the reference was different - it was to God not the world. And there does seem to be no doubt that the difficulty or problem would be very similar in both cases, viz. what criteria could be deployed to identify and differentiate God or 'Everything' from any other 'thing'?

Phillips' conclusion here is unequivocal.

> "How can there be anything other than the world? Until this question is answered, it is difficult to see what meaning can be given to the request for an explanation of the world's existence." (124)

Considering this negative polemic against certain attempts to illustrate what is meant by God's 'otherness from the world', Phillips' problem then is to show that there <u>is</u> a sense in which God can be described as 'other than the world' which is not affected by any of the particular problems so far presented. This he proceeds to do.

Phillips states:

> "When someone asks why there is anything at all, he need not be asking for the details of any process or development. His question may be about the sense, meaning or reality of everything." (125)

I doubt whether those philosophers or theologians interested in the Cosmological Argument have thought themselves to be asking for the 'details of a process of development'; rather, what has struck them is the sheer factual contingency of the world and they have seen in God an answer to their problem. But have they been interested in the <u>meaning</u> of the world <u>as such</u>? Well I suppose in one way they have, though I don't think that to say that their question was one of the 'meaning of the world' is to provide a very adequate characterization of their concern or puzzle. However this 'problem' glides into insignificance when one is further informed by Phillips that

> "in this context, questions about the meaning of the world and questions about the meaning of life are one and the same. Coming to see that there is a God involves seeing a new meaning in one's life." (126)

Now if we refer back to my earlier section on the Tractatus it will be remembered that Wittgenstein said something very similar there to the point Phillips is making.

> "What do I know about God and and purpose of life? I know that this world exists ... That life is the world ... That my will is good or evil. Therefore that good and evil are somehow connected with the meaning of the world. The meaning of life, i.e. the meaning of the world, we can call God. ... To believe in a God means to understand the question about the meaning of life ... To believe in God means to see that life has a meaning." (127)

But what Wittgenstein is saying here is, however, significant insofar as, as I have already tried to show, it is possible to provide an intelligible context for Wittgenstein's remarks - they are part of if you like a 'philosophical vision'. One can see why he wants to say, is justified in claiming, that 'life is the world', that 'to believe in God means to see that life has a meaning'. However this framework is not present, is not given with Phillips' remarks and, this being the case, it seems totally artificial, arbitrary and unjustifiable to claim, as he does, that questions about the meaning of the world are one and the same with questions about the meaning of life. In point of fact it is simply untrue that all those who have been puzzled about the meaning of the world have been puzzled about the meaning of life.

Indeed as the argument advances, further difficulties present themselves. Consider this remark.

> "But are we rid of the objection ... if instead of asking, 'What is the cause of everything?' we ask, 'What is the meaning of everything?' We know how to cope with questions which ask for the meaning of this or that ... We know the kind of questions they are. But what are we asking for when we ask for the meaning of everything? If we want to give an adequate explanation of the meaning of this, we must refer to something other than this. But if we ask for the meaning of everything what can we refer to which is other than everything?" (128)

It would therefore seem, as Phillips himself admits, that in questions about causality and meaningfulness when the world is what is referred to, we are faced with exactly the same difficulty. "The difficulty of asking of the world the same questions that can be asked about particular things." (129) If it does not make sense to ask what the cause of the world is, it would seem that it does not either make sense to ask what the meaning of the world is. Phillips however has other ideas. He states:

> "Does it follow that it is meaningless to ask for the meaning of the world? No; all that follows is that the meaning cannot be located outside the world." (130)

Well yes, given the argument which has gone before and the account of meaning already stated, it would seem obvious (a) that it would be unintelligible to talk of the meaning of the world as being 'located outside the world', but it would also seem obvious (b) that the conclusion that ought to be drawn is

that it is unintelligible to talk of a meaning of the world in any sense of the term. Unless of course Phillips is working with different senses of 'meaning' here, which seems possible when we consider the continuation of his quotation. He states:

> "This difficulty is not insuperable, since, often, what is held to make life meaningful and worthwhile is not something other than or beyond life, but an emphasis of certain features of life itself." (131)

Now one would not want to deny this claim but I think that it should be pointed out to Phillips, as Professor Grant does, that "this must be a different sense of 'meaning' from that in which the meaning of x must be something other than x." (132)

But how does the point Phillips is making elucidate or solve the difficulty he is struggling with, i.e. to present a sense in which God is 'other than the world' which escapes the difficulties he himself has stated? To be told that the problem of the meaning of the world is in fact a problem about the meaning of life, which can find or be given a solution in an emphasis of certain features of life, is all very well but it does not seem to advance our understanding of this other alleged sense in which God can be considered as 'other than the world', or indeed help us to appreciate what Christian believers want to claim concerning the relationship between the world and God. To take this last point, isn't it the case that Christian believers do want to claim that the meaning of the world lies outside it - in God? Now Phillips does see a difficulty here, but he does want to insist that such a claim is not, despite appearances, of 'religious importance'. As he states with reference to Hume (and in particular Hume's

Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion (133)) who maintained that ways of talking which are only intelligible within the world cannot be extended to include reference to a God or Being not in the world - who is 'other than' the world.

> "But why should anyone think that it is religiously important to show that Hume is mistaken? What if Hume's objections could be overcome, and we were able to think of another world which is a logical extension of this one, of a God who is the cause of everything in some way akin to the ways in which other causes cause particular things, and of a divine agency which operates beyond the world in a way akin to human agencies? Why should any of this be thought important to religion? If this world is meaningless, why should another world, which is a logical extension of it, be any less meaningless?" (134)

Why indeed, one may ask, given the description or the characterization of Christian beliefs which Phillips has presented us with. Surely for the Christian believer God is not 'another world', 'another cause', 'another agent' in anything like the sense that the world is the world or an agent an agent? Surely it is because God is believed to be qualitatively different or superior in every way that He is an object of religious significance? What Phillips has said here is a travesty of Christian beliefs. Interestingly enough he does later admit that if one pays attention to 'great religious teachers' and what they say about the

> "relation between this world and another world which is said to be the true reality, we are not struck by the continuity between them. On the contrary, what strikes us is the radical

discontinuity of the relation." (135)

However, Phillips sees this pertinent remark as having no bearing on his earlier comments, but only serving as a prelude to his own account of what it means to talk of God's 'otherness from the world' - what it means to find life meaningful.

Initially we are referred to the 'analogies of birth and death'. Phillips states:

> "It is said that before a man can see this world in the light of a reality which is beyond it, he must undergo a radical change. The analogies of birth and death are used to stress the nature of this change. Before a man can enter the world, the kingdom of God, he must die to this world. Or, to express the point in terms of the other analogy: before a man can begin to comprehend the reality which is beyond the world, he must be born again." (136)

But what sense does this way of talking have? What does Phillips mean by 'dying to this world' or 'being born again'?

Here, Phillips refers us to Plato's discussion in the Phaedo where, we are told, Plato speaks of the strivings of the soul to turn away from the temporal to the eternal. Plato, according to Phillips,

> "calls the turning away from the temporal to the eternal a form of purification or the practice of dying, and wants to contrast things seen from the world's point of view with things seen from the standpoint of the eternal." (137)

These last phrases are crucial here in understanding what Phillips is saying, that is, the opposition between 'things seen from the world's point of view' and 'things seen from the standpoint of the eternal'. It is only in terms of a 'religious

morality' which transcends 'normal morals or ethics' that one can fully understand Phillips' claims here. As Phillips states:

> "The man who pays attention to moral considerations will not worry if he does not attain the worldly advance which immoral action would have brought him. Still, he does have certain moral expectations. He has certain rights which may or may not be satisfied. Sometimes he will see that his rights ought not to be satisfied, and that competing rights have stronger claims. At other times his rights are wrongfully neglected. At times such as these, he will feel harmed, and expect some kind of restitution. Thus, in their different ways, the man whose aim is to satisfy his desires and the man who upholds certain moral principles are both concerned about how the world is treating them. Both in Wittgenstein's phrase, see 'objects as it were from the midst of them' and in so doing see things from the world's point of view. Much of what is meant by seeing things from the point of view of the eternal can be grasped by understanding what it means to die to the expectations created by desire or moral rights. ... in this attitude people are seen, not as the world sees them, but as God sees them." (138)

First of all, it does seem rather strange to talk of the moral man as 'seeing things from the world's point of view', as demanding 'restitution'. It seems even more strange to hear him talked about and classed along with the man 'whose aim is to satisfy his desires'. What Phillips, it appears, wants to draw here, is a contrast between a religious morality, a selfless morality, on the one hand, and a secular or 'ordinary' morality on the other. Note again the reference to a phrase

from Wittgenstein's 'Tractatus period', which we have already examined. The man who wishes to satisfy his desires and the moral man 'both see objects as it were from the midst of them' and their position is contrasted with that of the upholder of a religious morality. Is this however a legitimate use of Wittgenstein's phrase in this context? Let us look back briefly at the Notebooks, and to the particular reference Phillips has in mind, and fill in the background to the quotation. It then reads,

> "the work of art is the object seen sub specie aeternitatis; and the good life is the world seen sub specie aeternitatis. This is the connexion between art and ethics. The usual way of looking at things sees objects as it were from the midst of them, the view sub specie aeternitatis from outside."

Combine this with this further quotation.

> "Ethics does not treat of the world. Ethics must be a condition of the world." (139)

Now it would seem illegitimate, given this understanding, to say of the ethical man that he sees 'objects from the midst of them'. Rather, the ethical position is contrasted with that of 'seeing objects from the midst of them'. The ethical life consists in 'seeing the world' sub specie aeternitatis, 'ethics is a condition of the world.' Indeed, if we recall too that for Wittgenstein 'to believe in God means to see that life has a meaning' and 'good and evil are connected with the meaning of life', we can see that, for Wittgenstein, the only possible kind of morality or 'ethical vision' was a religious morality. Religious morality constitutes the ethical for Wittgenstein

there can be no possible contrast, despite Phillips' claims, for Wittgenstein, between, if you like, a secular and a religious morality. Despite this particular confusion on Phillips' part however, I think one should note the similarity between Phillips' and Wittgenstein's accounts of religious morality.

Further, we have been informed that 'in this attitude people are seen as God sees them'. What does this mean; to see people as God sees them? What is involved here, for Phillips, is that

> "one must not fix one's attention on how people are: useful or useless for one, desirable or undesirable, morally deserving or undeserving, but on the fact that they are ... Eternal love, love of human beings as such, ... cannot suffer defeat." (140)

To speak thus, for Phillips, is to give content to what 'some religious teachers' have understood by a concern for others which is 'other than the world'.

Again here, note the important use made of the Wittgensteinian Tractarian distinction between 'how' - how the world and people are and 'that' - that the world and people are; the latter representing the religious attitude. And this distinction is brought into play again when Phillips attempts to trace a parallel between a "love for other people which is 'other than the world'" and what the 'same religious teachers' wish to say about "the fortunes and misfortunes which may befall one." (141) Here too, we are informed, "there is an all-important distinction between how things are, and that things are." (142)

It is to the book of Job, rather than to the theodocies

that Phillips turns for his illustration. He states:

> "Job, I believe, is a good example of a profound dependence on a supernatural God. It would be difficult to imagine more tragic circumstances than those depicted in the Book of Job. ... If one attributes goodness to God by an inference from the events of one's life, [such a God would by definition, for Phillips, be a natural God] it is difficult to see how Job could have avoided saying that God is evil ... But we do not find Job doing this. Instead, he prays: ... the Lord gave, and the Lord have taken away; blessed he the name of the Lord." (143)

The distinction between a supernatural and natural God is crucial in this context. A natural God would be such that

> "no matter how varied our moral opinions might be, we do know what would count against calling such a God "good" in many instances. If our possessions were plundered, our servants killed ... the condemnation of most of us would be immediate if it could be shown that a God on whom we were causally dependent were responsible." (144)

Initially Job himself had desired an explanation of the disasters which had overtaken him but, in coming to see that the disasters had no explanation, he became freed from his 'dependence' on them. What indeed, Phillips claims,

> "Job came to was the possibility of loving the world as such, to what the mystics have called love of the beauty of the world. The beauty of the world in this context does not admit of a contrast with the ugliness of the world, since it comprises both its beauty and its ugliness understood relatively. The absolute beauty of the world can be equated with the sense of the world." (145)

'Not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists.' Or, as Rhees expresses the point:

> "Why is there anything at all? What is the sense of it? an expression of wonder at the world. (Isn't it extraordinary that anything at all should exist?) Which easily passes into reverse at the wonder of it - the wonder at there being anything at all." (146)

But why call this religious view of the world, 'other than' the world? What specific content is given to the phrase 'other than' here? Well, for Phillips,

> "the reason why love of God is said to be other than the world is ... because it entails dying to the world's way of regarding things. On one level, this can be regarded as dying to the world. On another it can be called love of the world. This is because 'world' in the first sense refers to what we have called 'seeing objects from the midst of them'. The love of God, which involves dying to this world, does not mean that the believer has no regard for the world. On the contrary, the love of God is manifested in the believer's relationship to people and things. In this sense, he can be said to have a love of the world. To see the world as God's world, would, primarily, be to possess this love." (147)

Now in case it has been forgotten, it must be emphasised that in expressing these claims Phillips is attempting to articulate what is meant by, as he understands it, God's 'otherness from the world'. That is, he is trying to articulate a model of transcendence which would escape the, for him, insuperable difficulties pertaining to Cosmological Arguments, but at the same time indicate one direction in

which we could look if we desire to understand what might be meant by saying that God is 'other than the world', transcendent to the world, or, God is the source of creator of the world. He is presenting a model of religious transcendence as opposed to a model of metaphysical transcendence. And to accept such a model seems to involve accepting certain consequences. For example, with reference to seeing the world as God's creation, Phillips feels constrained to state the following.

> "To see the world as God's creation is to see meaning in life. This meaningfulness remains untouched by the evil in the world because it is not arrived at by an inference from it." (148)

Before commenting critically on Phillips' model of religious transcendence I think it is interesting to note that, for Phillips, despite the difficulties, which he feels Cosmological Arguments face, their attempt to move from the fact that

> "anything exists to the reality of God has within it the seeds of the religious beliefs we have been grappling with - namely, the insistence that it is by contemplating the existence of human beings and natural events as such that one comes to see what is meant by God's being other than the world." (149)

Thus we have displayed Phillips' 'supernaturalistic' concept of God, displayed in direct opposition to a 'naturalistic' or 'anthropomorphic' concept of God. First of all, is an 'anthropomorphic' conception of God identical with that of a 'naturalistic' conception of God? Phillips seems to think that they are but I doubt whether he can justify his

claim. By an 'anthropomorphic' conception of God what is normally meant is a concept of God which is described or conceived in a human form or with human attributes. By a 'naturalistic' conception of God Phillips seems to mean a conception of God whose nature "depends on one's fortunes in this life."(150) That is, insofar as evil abounds this seems to tell against describing such a God as good. One may still want to call such a God good despite the evil - one may think there are 'putative reasons' for the evil - and, even so, to call such a God good is very different from saying that ~~t~~His goodness is identical to human goodness. I think that to conceive of God anthropomorphically may well involve conceiving of God 'naturally', in Phillips' sense of the term, but a 'naturalistic' conception of God does not seem to entail God being conceived of in an anthropomorphic fashion - or, at least, not necessarily. However, perhaps for Phillips a 'natural' God would be an anthropomorphic God by definition, but I think it should be noted that, before such a claim should be accepted, some argumentation should be presented to justify what is being claimed.

However, it is a 'supernaturalistic' concept of God Phillips is interested in; a God whose nature is independent of 'one's fortunes in life', independent of consequences. But surely this is where the difficulties begin? Is God's independence not construed in such a way that it is difficult to see what could be meant in this context by the 'reality' of such a God, by God's otherness from the world - in short, the ontological import or significance of such a God? Now I could imagine Phillips replying in the following way to this question,

'I see your difficulty here. You feel I am denying a certain metaphysical reality to God, you suspect that for me God is not an object, an entity or being of any kind. And of course you are right. If you plot the depth grammar of religious belief this is what you will discover.' Yes, one may feel like replying, but have you (a) really adequately plotted the depth grammar of Christian religious belief as you claim to be doing, and (b) even if one accepts your account, wouldn't or shouldn't there be a radical change in Christian concepts or terms? Surely, if your account is correct, it is very obvious that their meaning is very different from what normal Christian believers believe them to mean. 'Well, to take your last point,' Phillips might respond, 'haven't I said that to 'come to see that there is a God involves seeing a new meaning in one's life' and again, 'to see the world as God's creation is to see meaning in life.' I see no reason why one should not continue to talk in this way; terms like 'God', 'creation' have a role in the language and I fail to see why they should not continue to play that role in the language. All I have achieved is to provide you with a proper understanding of such concepts - I have plotted their depth grammar.'

Can one rest content with this account however? Consider: 'To see that there is a God involves seeing a new meaning in one's life.' What does 'involves' mean here? It may mean that believing in God is a necessary condition for finding life meaningful. But this cannot be true because people can find life meaningful who cannot, at the same time, believe in God. It does not seem to be the case that to find life meaningful there is a logical dependence on belief in God. Nor,

alternatively, is it true that believing in God is a sufficient condition for finding life meaningful. One could believe in God and, because of this belief in God, find no meaning in life. One may find that one's belief in God is a barrier to finding life meaningful. Imagine the cry: 'Oh, if only there were no God, I could accept life.' I suspect, however, that Phillips has more in mind here than the presentation of conditions. Rather, he wants to maintain that believing in God is identical with finding life meaningful.

To examine what is involved here let us look at a statement of Phillips', already quoted, which is more specific in its presentation and import. 'To see the world as God's creation is to see meaning in life.' Again, Phillips cannot be talking here about merely a sufficient condition of finding life meaningful. To see the world as the creation of God does not necessarily mean that life will be seen as meaningful. There is no contradiction involved in claiming that one believes God created the world and, at the same time, denying that life is meaningful. However, if Phillips is identifying what is involved in 'seeing the world as God's creation' with 'finding life meaningful' then surely one must object? This claim can only be true if 'seeing the world as the creation of God' and 'finding life meaningful' mean the same, which they most certainly do not. However, if what is involved is rather the recommendation or stipulation that instead of talking about the world as being created by God we should rather talk about what is involved in finding life meaningful, then we have a very radical change of meaning and reference in Christian religious language. Within traditional Christian belief, to say

that 'God created the world' is to say that an entity called God, by a special act, brought into being or existence the world. If, however, what the believer ought to mean by this statement about God is that he finds life meaningful - not even that he finds life meaningful because he believes God created the world - then it surely is true that we are presented with a very radical change in meaning of Christian terms and concepts. As Holland states, when discussing statements which acknowledge God as the creator of the world, "I should prefer it to be said that they are statements not so much about God as about the believer." (151) And, insofar as this is the import of what Phillips is saying, I doubt whether he can validly claim that he is merely plotting the depth grammar, understanding properly, [illegible] specifically Christian beliefs. As R. Trigg has stated:

> "In Christianity it seems to be a tautology that God created the universe, but clearly human commitment to God did not create it." (152)

It is certainly true that within Christian theology and belief there is often the danger of plotting the grammar of God such that God is 'objectified', seen merely as an agent among agents, a cause among causes. But though that danger exists, and needs to be pointed out, it is surely wrong to maintain, as Phillips does, that the real mistake in this context is to believe that within Christian thought and belief God requires to be thought of as, for example, any kind of agent at all, any kind of entity. Surely one must agree with Professor Hepburn's comments on Phillip's reference to Job as an example of an authentic Christian believer:

> "In the case of Job surely the idea of a

non-intervening God is intelligible only if it is allowed to remain conceivable that he might intervene. It is intelligible that Job should say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord have taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord' - intelligible because of the many instances or examples of God's providential care and goodness in non-problematic contexts i.e. the situations from which in the Judaic tradition, he learns and sees that God is good, not evil. In other words believing against the appearances is intelligible only if there is also such a thing as believing with the appearances. Thus I doubt if Phillips makes good his claim that authentic Christian beliefs about God are altogether different, logically, from the beliefs Hume attacked in the Dialogues. The beliefs Hume attacked do not exhaust the content of authentic Christianity: but neither can Christianity dispense with all of them." (153)

It would appear that the 'naturalistic' concept of God, which Phillips derides so much, must be thought of as very much an integral aspect of any concept of God which is to be recognised or identified as consistent with traditional Christian conceptions or beliefs about God. It simply will not do to claim the following, as Rhees does when discussing the relationship between the world and God or the Eternal.

"Someone may say that religion turns from the temporal towards the eternal. And although the notion that 'Love is Eternal' is important ... the love of man and woman is not centred on the eternal, on this world's relation to it, as religion may be. To think in that religious way is to have a certain view of human life; I do not think there is any thought about 'the world' apart from that." (154)

If one presents an analysis of the nature of a 'super-natural' God in the way or manner which Phillips does, it becomes very difficult to state or claim some of the things which are normally stated and claimed of God within the Christian tradition. This is because God has ceased to be the centre of attention as any kind of object, cause or agent and what has occupied the centre of the stage is the believer himself. Now, insofar as I have already criticised Phillips' critique of the 'naturalistic concept of deity', I have already argued that Christian orthodoxy requires that this 'strand of the logic' of the concept of God be retained. Furthermore, if we examine certain Christian doctrines it seems to me that the kind of things which are maintained there, which are believed, are unintelligible unless one presupposes or assumes that - in the case of the two doctrines I shall be examining - God is an agent in some sense of the term.

The two doctrines I have in mind are (a) Petitionary Prayer and (b) Miracle. Phillips, in the case of Petitionary Prayer, believes an intelligible account can be given of what it means to petition God which is consistent with his meta-physical atheism - although there is an inconsistency in his thesis - and Holland, in his discussion of what it means to identify an event as a miracle, believes an intelligible account can be given which makes no reference to the notion of God as agent, as the agent of the miracle. I wish now to critically examine their arguments.

v(a)

PETITIONARY PRAYER

For D. Z. Phillips the great difficulty which certain accounts of petitionary prayer present is that they elucidate petitionary prayers as presenting specific requests to God which, on occasions, are answered favourably, such that it can be maintained that God is responsible for bringing about one event in the world as opposed to another. And the problem, for Phillips, would then be that if such accounts were accepted

> "must we not say that the relation between prayer and God, or between God and the world, is causal, and that prayer is a way of getting things done." (155)

and such a conclusion is anathema to Phillips.

For Phillips, however, such an account of petitionary prayer can be dismissed because the suggestion is "that the efficacy of a prayer is like the efficacy of a spell. Prayer is thought of as incantation." (156) Or, "one believes in a necessary connection between what one asks for, and what one gets." (157) In such a situation, for Phillips, it would be the case that

> "the content of what is said is contingently related to the effect obtained. The meaning of what is said is subordinate to the results of the spell." (158)

Now all this seems to be a gross caricature of what certain religious believers have claimed about the causal efficacy of prayer. Surely, rather than emphasising any necessary connection between the petition and the answer to

the petition is it not the case that all petitions end with the proviso that 'Thy will be done'? A petitionary prayer must be in keeping with the Divine will if it is to be answered as the petitioner requests. To describe such an activity as on a par with 'a spell, an incantation' is to grossly misrepresent what is involved, for religious believers, in petitioning God. To pray, petition God, is to request that a certain x will occur, it is not to invoke a form of words which will necessitate its occurrence.

For Phillips, however, insofar as such prayers can be thought of as incantations, they are superstitious. But they are superstitious, not merely because they presuppose the existence of certain causal links which are in fact non-existent, quasi-causal, but more fundamentally because, in an important sense, for Phillips, such prayers and accounts of prayer have been divorced from their proper religious context. This can occur in two ways. First of all, a prayer can be divorced from the rest of the life of the individual who is praying. As Phillips states:

> "The importance of prayer, to a large extent, depends on the role it plays in the life of the person who offers it. If the prayer is an isolated occurrence, having little or no relation to the life of the individual prior to or after the act of 'praying', one tends to doubt whether what has been said can illustrate what prayer is. One might put forward a general thesis that the more tenuous the relation between the prayer and the rest of the person's life, the more suspect the prayer becomes; the likelihood of superstition increases." (159)

Unless prayer plays an important role in a person's life "it is not characteristic of the religious role of prayer in the life of the believer." (160)

Secondly then, accounts of prayer can be divorced from the role of prayer in the religious life and, if this occurs, "one is back in the realm of superstition." (161) Thus for Phillips,

> "in order to understand the language of prayer, which in this case means understanding what it means to ask God for something, one must take account of the relationship to God within which the prayer is made. The point is not that God cannot answer requests unless there is a spiritual relation between the believer and Himself, but rather, that in order to understand what we mean by asking, receiving, and thanking in this context, one must understand the spiritual relationship." (162)

What then does it mean to ask and receive in a religious context?

Consider an example where a child is seriously ill. Medical science has been taken to the limit but to no avail. The doctors inform the parents there is nothing more they can do, that things are in 'God's hands'. A silly phrase certainly, but one which may be intended to express the limits of their science - not every disease or ailment can be cured - or, perhaps, the implied suggestion that while their methods and techniques have failed one could always try 'God's method or technique'. In this situation the parents pray to God to save the child, knowing the seriousness of the situation. What does it mean here to pray to God to save the child? Well, for

Phillips, if the parents are religious

> "they meet the possibility of things going either way in God. They recognise their own helplessness, that the way things go is beyond their control, and seek something to sustain them which does not depend on the way things go, namely, the love of God. If the child recovers, the recovery occasions the prayer of thanksgiving. If one thinks in terms of causing God to save the child, one is nearer the example of non-religious parents who pray 'O, God, save our child' where the thought behind the prayer is that God could save the child if He wanted to. The prayer is an attempt at influencing the divine will. In short, one is back in the realm of superstition." (163)

Two points may immediately be made here. First of all, surely Phillips, given his earlier comments, should classify the non-religious parents' prayer not as a prayer but as a 'prayer'? Secondly, much use is made in this context of the term 'superstition'. Now surely the criteria of what constitutes the superstitious, in any particular context, are very much dependent on what are considered to be the criteria of truth in that self-same particular context. Thus, before one can validly identify any activity as superstitious, i.e. praying to a God believed to be causally active, one must have some idea of what would constitute truth and, in the example in question, a 'true' petition to God. And for Phillips a 'true' or valid petition to God is best understood "not as an attempt at influencing the way things go, but as an expression of, and a request for, devotion to God through the way things go." (164)

The account he wishes to give is best summed up in the

following passage.

> "When deep religious believers pray <u>for</u> something, they are not so much asking God to bring this about, but in a way telling Him of the strength of their desires. They realise that things may not go as they wish, but they are asking to be able to go on living whatever happens. In ... prayers of petition, the believer is trying to find a meaning and a hope that will deliver him from the elements in his life which threaten to destroy it: ... his desires." (165)

Consider the case of the religious parents praying for their child to live. Now, according to Phillips, they are not so much praying '<u>for</u> something', in the sense that they are asking God to bring a certain something about, but rather 'telling Him of the strength of their desires'. Thus the petition 'God please save my child' is <u>not</u> to be understood as a request for God to intervene, but rather as an expression of their desires and feelings with regard to their child. The child means so much to them, they cannot contemplate losing her and when they say 'God save my child' they are simply giving expression to their desires and feelings with regard to their child. Now is this analysis acceptable? First of all, is it true that <u>all</u> prayers of petition flow from desires that threaten to prevent one going on living? Secondly, can one accept in the case of the parents that their prayer for their child to be saved <u>means</u> they are simply telling God of the strength of their desires? Certainly it is true that the strength of the desires may be an <u>indication</u> of the fervour of their request for their child to be saved. One may be tempted

to say that unless petitions were in line with one's desires, expressive of one's desires, they would not be real petitions. But that does not entail that when the religious believer 'prays for something' this means that he is simply telling God of the strength of his desires. He is surely, in any normal sense of the term, requesting God to act in a particular way.

For Phillips this last point cannot be the case, because such parents realise, while petitioning, that 'things may not go as they wish'. It is God's will which is important here, not their desires or wishes. Now of course it is true that religious believers conclude their petitions to God by adding, 'but Thy will be done, not mine'. But does the fact that reference to God's will is included in the petition justify Phillips' conclusion that this indicates that such believers are not asking God to act in a particular way? The fact that petitions to God may not be answered in keeping with the requests made of God is simply an indication to the religious believer that his petitions did not cohere with God's will. It is not an indication that no specific request to God to act in a particular way was made in the first place.

Furthermore, if Phillips' account is correct, if this is the significance of petitionary prayer, why do such prayers have a point or purpose for believers? Now Phillips himself sees a difficulty here for his analysis of what is meant by petitioning God. That is,

> "if 'Don't let her die', simply means, 'Thy will be done', why on earth should one bother to make the specific request in the first place; why not simply say, 'Thy will be done'?" (166)

First of all, how would such an account differ from a fatalistic account? Now for Phillips there is a difference here because fatalism, for Phillips, is "a belief in what must be the case. Praying to a God for whom all things are possible is to love God in whatever is the case." (167) 'To love God in whatever is the case' entails for Phillips that "the meaning of the specific request is internally related to the expression of readiness to accept the will of God." (168) Secondly, if this is all Phillips had to say here I think at least we would be presented with an intelligible, coherent thesis. That is, with reference to our above example: 'A request or petition to God 'to save the child' is not so much expressive of a request that God intervene or act in the world to save the child, but is rather a statement of the parents' desires, the strength of their desires, and a recognition on their part that what is the will of God will prevail, not their will or desires. But Phillips wants to say more. Not only do the parents 'realise that things may not go as they wish' but, further, 'they are asking to be able to go on living whatever happens'. They are asking for a 'meaning and a hope' that will deliver them from their desires. As Phillips states: "the believer is asking that his desires will not destroy the spirit of God within him." (169) However, if this is so, if this is what is requested, why should the original specific request gain any mention at all? Phillips' reply here is tentative as he states:

> "I think that since a man is concerned with hope and meaning in his life, it is the desires which he actually does have which he wants to bring to

> God. After all, it is these desires and not any others which threaten to overwhelm him, and through which he must seek God." (170)

But this poses a new difficulty. In what does the asking consist here? Surely a request here to be able 'to go on living whatever happens', 'to find meaning and hope' despite one's desires, is to request of God that he actively intervene? It is to request of God that he act, not, however, in the sense that he bring about certain extra-mental events but that he produce a certain state of mind, a certain attitude or attitudes. And this, as W. D. Hudson has correctly stated, is to request of God that

> "he produce an effect in the natural world. The fact that the effect is the preservation of a certain psychological condition within the petitioner himself does not make it any less an effect in the natural world." (171)

What then, given this, are we to make of Phillips' claim that when 'deep religious believers' pray for something they are not asking God to actively intervene in the world or assuming that God can actively intervene in the world?

Look again at the argument as Phillips sees it, with the example of the grief stricken parents in mind. Their prayer, 'God save my child', is not a request nor believed to be a request, a petition to God to causally intervene to save the child, because (given Phillips' understanding of the inviolate nature of causal links) such a request it is known need not necessarily be causally efficacious, answered in accord with the petition. It is God's will which is important and crucial, not the petitioner's. Given this understanding for Phillips,

the nature of the petition is best expressed as an articulation of the strength of the petitioner's desires and, furthermore, a request that the petitioner 'be able to go on living'; that, despite his desires he will be given a 'meaning and a hope' that will deliver him from his desires.

Now if God can be the agent who causally produces certain mental conditions or attitudes, why can he not equally well produce effects in extra-mental reality? If causal links are possible in one case, if God can be an agent in one case, why cannot God be a causal agent in the other? On the one hand we were told that a mistake was being made if, in relation to prayers of petition, we thought of God as any kind of special causal agent producing effects in the world. On the other hand Phillips' very own analysis of what it means to petition God seems to demand that we just so conceive God. The understanding of what is meant in a religious sense by petitioning God seems to involve petitioning God to causally intervene in the world. It would seem, despite Phillips' claims, that an account of petitionary prayer cannot be given which is compatible with an understanding of a God who is not a causally active agent; that an understanding of what it means to petition God demands that He be thought of as a causally active agent. At the very least Phillips' account does not falsify this contention, and, further, his account is thus not compatible with his metaphysical atheism.

MIRACLE

Within traditional Christian theology God is thought of as the sustainer of the universe, as, if you like, a necessary, but not a sufficient, condition of all events *in* the world. A further necessary condition of events *in* the world, it is believed, are the causal antecedents of such events; the world being thought of as a causal nexus. Thus, God's sustaining activity and antecedent causal conditions are individually necessary conditions and jointly a sufficient condition of the occurrence of any event in the world. However, it is believed that, on occasions, certain events can occur which are the product of *direct* divine activity *in* the world - the action of God being seen not only as a necessary but also a sufficient condition of such events. Such events are described as miracles. That is, as events which are brought about by direct action of God they violate not only all *known* natural laws and processes, but also, as God is their sole author, they are events which are *naturally inexplicable* in *principle*. Nature, if you like, left to its own 'devices' could *never* produce such events. Furthermore, as these events are believed to be caused by a personal God, a God of love and compassion etc., it is believed that God must have a reason for causing such events to occur; the events must be in keeping with the divine nature.

Thus within Christian theology a miracle is defined as an event which is naturally inexplicable in principle, brought about by direct divine activity and in keeping with the divine

nature and furthering divine purposes for the world. Note, however, the crucial importance which must be given to the fact that miracles, as events, are caused by direct divine activity in the world. It is because direct divine activity is involved that events, classified as miracles, are thought of as events which must be naturally inexplicable in principle and, further, events, the nature of which must be in conformity with the divine nature. Further one cannot observe divine activity and most certainly not direct divine activity in the world. I can observe, know what it means to observe e.g. my son acting, hitting his friends, untidying his room etc. But what would it mean to say that I observed God acting? God's actions are, rather, mediated through certain events in the world. As N. Kemp Smith states:

> "We never experience the Divine sheerly in and by itself: we experience the Divine solely through and in connexion with what is other than the Divine." (172)

Now this problem is especially crucial when one tries to ascertain what would be involved in identifying a particular event as a miracle, as miraculous. If one cannot observe direct divine activity as such, how can one identify an event as being brought about by God's direct action? It seems impossible. And yet, such events, if they occur, will be events which are naturally inexplicable in principle, events which violate natural laws and events which are in keeping with the known will and nature of God. Perhaps here we can discover some criteria of identity? A miraculous event will be an event which is naturally inexplicable in principle, an event which violates not only all known but all possible natural

laws. Perhaps we could have criteria to identify such an event? Also, a miraculous event will be an event which is in accord with the known will and nature of God and surely, given the existence of a theological tradition, it should be possible to provide criteria such that we could identify such an event. R. F. Holland believes such criteria can be provided, so let us turn to examine his argument.

Holland begins his article by claiming that the conception of the miraculous as a violation of natural law is inadequate (a) because "it is unduly restrictive" and (b) because there is a sense "in which it is not restrictive enough." (173) Such a conception is 'unduly restrictive' for Holland because he believes there can be such a thing as a 'contingency concept of the miraculous'. And such a conception is not restrictive enough, because being a violation of a natural law is merely a necessary but not a sufficient condition of the miraculous. The 'extra' which is required is reference to a "religious background". (174) Let us see, first of all, what Holland has to say about the conception of miracles as violations of natural law and deal later with his 'contingency concept of the miraculous'. Holland states:

> "though I do not take the conception of miracles as violations of matural law to be an adequate conception of the miraculous, [for the reasons given] I shall maintain that occurrences are conceivable in respect to which it could be said that some law or laws of nature had been violated - or it could be said equally that there was a contradiction in our experience: and if the surrounding circumstances were appropriate it would be possible for such occurrences to

> have a kind of human significance and hence intelligible for them to be hailed as miracles. I see no philosophical reason against this." (175)

In developing his argument Holland considers two possible objections which if true, would seem not merely to count against the possibility of identifying a particular event as a violation of natural law but, more fundamentally, would illustrate the logical incoherence of the concept of the miraculous understood as a 'violation of natural law'. The first objection Holland considers is that well-known difficulty put forward by Hume which is apparently concerned with the problem of how the 'testimony of others' could be assessed when the event testified to is allegedly miraculous. Considering, as Hume states:

> "There must be a uniform experience against every miraculous event, otherwise the event would not merit that appelation. And as a uniform experience amounts to a proof, there is here a direct and full proof, from the nature of the fact, against the existence of any miracle." (176)

Now Holland feels that the problem here is not merely one of how the testimony of others could be assessed but is much better appreciated if it is generally understood as a "single problem of evidence." (179) Taken thus however, Hume's problem would appear to highlight the particular difficulties attendant upon identifying a particular event as miraculous. However, Holland suspects there is more to the argument than this. He states:

> "For if Hume is right, the situation is not just

> that we do not happen as a matter of fact to have certitude or even good evidence for the occurrence of any miracle, but rather that nothing can count as good evidence: the logic of testimony precludes this. ... Equally it must follow that there can be no such thing as (because nothing is being allowed to count as) discovering, recognising, becoming aware, etc. that a miracle has occurred ... no such thing as failing to find out ... that a miracle has occurred either; no such thing as a discovered or an undiscovered miracle ... en fin, no such thing as a miracle. So Hume's argument is, after all, an argument against the very possibility of miracles." (178)

Taken thus, Holland believes the argument fails, but he asks us to consider the second objection which can be made here attacking the logical coherence of the concept of the miraculous understood as a violation of a law of nature. He believes that the arguments dovetail here to such an extent that, by juxtapositing them together, we shall be enabled to get a better understanding of what is actually involved in describing a particular event as a violation of natural law.

The second objection Holland examines is the old, familiar objection that by describing a particular event as a violation of natural law one is confusing a law or laws of nature with judicial laws. It makes sense to talk of breaking the laws of the state because they merely prescribe rules of conduct. However, laws of nature are not prescriptions. They rather describe; they describe the occurrences of what they are about. And if any event occurs which is not in accord with known laws of nature, this event must falsify those self-same

laws of nature. Thus,

> "the relation between an occurrence and a law of nature is different than from a man's relation to a law of the state, for when the latter is deviated from we do not ... say the law is wrong but rather that the man is wrong - he is a criminal. To suggest that an occurrence which has falsified a law of nature is wrong would be an absurdity: and it would be just as absurd to suggest that the law has been violated. Nothing can be conceived to be a violation of natural law, and if that is how the miraculous is conceived there can be no such thing as the miraculous. Laws of nature can be formulated or reformulated to cope with any eventuality, and would-be miracles are transformed automatically into natural occurrences the moment science gets on the track of them." (179)

Now Holland is not satisfied with this account because, not only do laws of nature describe what has happened, they also predict what will occur. Thus, as Holland sees it, legal laws and laws of nature have this feature in common; with regard to future events or behaviour they

> "both stipulate something. Moreover the stipulations which we call laws of nature are in so many cases so solidly founded and knitted together with other stipluations, other laws, that they come to be something in the nature of a framework through which we look at the world and which to a considerable degree dictates our ways of describing phenomena." (180)

However, if one responds to the second objection in this way the difficulty is that the response seems to reinforce the critical point being urged by Hume, which was considered in the first objection. That is, once one begins to consider laws

of nature as constituting a kind of 'framework' by which and through which the world is observed, then isn't the Humean point reinforced, because

> "surely it must seem that our reluctance to throw overboard a whole nexus of well-established, mutually supporting laws and theories must be so great as to justify us in rejecting out of hand, and not being prepared to assign even a degree of probability to, any testimony to an occurrence which our system of natural law decisively rules out." (181)

Now Holland believes we do not have to accept such a conclusion because, for the very obvious reason, if we deny any kind of certainty to an individual event, we shall be unable to account how our nexus of laws were developed and set up. However once this is said, once it is claimed that we can

> "upgrade the probability of natural laws into certainty ... and in the interest of good conceptual sense ... upgrade ... the probability attaching to particular events ... so as to allow that some of these ... can be certain and really known to be what they are." (182)

we are, as Holland conceives it, at the very least beginning to see what may be involved in describing a particular event as a miracle, as a violation of natural law. If a particular event occurs which appears to 'violate' certain known natural laws and we are certain that the laws obtain and equally certain that the event has occurred we are then committed to say, if we wish to describe the event as a miracle, that (a) it is impossible and (b) it has happened. Holland expresses the point in this way:

> "a conflict of certainties is a necessary though

> not a sufficient condition of the miraculous. In other words, a miracle, though it cannot only be this, must at least be something the occurrence of which can be categorised at one and the same time as empirically certain and conceptually impossible. If it were less than conceptually impossible it would reduce merely to a very unusual occurrence such as could be treated (because of the empirical certainty) in the manner of a decisive experiment and result in a modification to the prevailing conception of natural law; while if it were less than empirically certain nothing more would be called for in regard to it than a suspension of judgment." (183)

First of all, in comment here, note Holland's description of the event as conceptually impossible. A more natural expression to use would surely be physically impossible. And of course that which is physically impossible is not conceptually or logically impossible. It may be physically impossible - given the law of gravity - for me to float upwards if I jump from the ninth floor of a tower building, but it surely is not conceptually or logically impossible. We shall have to explore this use of the term 'conceptually impossible' further. Also, why should anyone want to talk in the way Holland has described, why should anyone want to talk of a 'contradiction in their experience'? Why not, if they are certain that a particular event has occurred, rather than claiming the event is empirically certain and conceptually impossible, just say the occurrence of the event falsifies certain natural laws such that the event, although once thought to be impossible, is in fact not so, and the proper

course to adopt is to search for the natural cause of the event? Indeed,how could one ever validly claim that no natural cause of the event could ever be found, which Holland's account seems to demand?

Holland believes he can answer these difficulties. First of all,he claims:

> "the idea that one cannot establish the absence of a natural cause is not to my mind the unassailable piece of logic it might seem at first glance to be. Both our common understanding and our scientific understanding include conceptions of the sort of thing that can and cannot happen, and of the sort of thing that has to take place to bring about some other sort of thing." (184)

What,however,can Holland have in mind here? What does the reference to a common understanding as well as a scientific understanding signify? What indeed is meant by, in this context, a common understanding? Holland gives us this example.

> "Suppose that a horse, which has been normally born and reared, and is now deprived of all nourishment (we could be completely certain of this) - suppose that, instead of dying, this horse goes on thriving (which again is something we could be completely certain about). A series of thorough examinations reveals no abnormality in the horse's condition: its digestive system is always found to be working and to be at every moment in more or less the state it would have been in if the horse had eaten a meal an hour or two before. This is utterly inconsistent with our whole conception of the needs and capacities of horses; and because it is an impossibility in the light of our prevailing conceptions, my

> objector, in the event of its happening, would expect us to abandon the conception - as though we had to have consistency at any price. Whereas the position I advocate is that the price is too high and it would be better to be left with the inconsistency; and that in any event the prevailing conception has a logical status not altogether unlike that of a necessary truth and cannot be simply thrown away as a mistake - not when it rests on the experience of generations ... and especially not when one considers the way our conception of the needs and capacities of horses interlocks with conceptions of the needs and capacities of other living things ... These conceptions form part of a common understanding that is well established and with us to stay." (185)

To demand that one continue to look for a natural explanation of this strange occurrence would, for Holland, be 'too high a price' to pay for consistency. The prevailing conception, which is an integral part of our common understanding, has a logical status not unlike a necessary truth. Perhaps it is now becoming clearer why Holland refers to events described as miracles as conceptually impossible, given that the 'prevailing conception', which they contradict, has a status not unlike a necessary truth. Further, does the regard we pay to our 'common understanding' mean that we can reject scientific discoveries and conceptual changes if they are in conflict with our 'common understanding'? Holland is slightly equivocal here. He states:

> "Any number of discoveries remains to be made by zoologists and plenty of scope exists for conceptual revision in biological theory, but it

> is a confusion to think it follows from this that we are less than well enough acquainted with and might have serious misconceptions about, what is and is not possible in the behaviour under familiar conditions of common objects with which we have a long history of practical dealings. Similarly with the relation between common understanding and physical discoveries, physical theories ... The objector who thinks there is a loophole in it for natural explanation strikes me as lacking a sense of the absurd." (186)

He may lack a sense of the absurd but until Holland claims definitively that we can rely on the understanding provided by our 'common understanding' in opposition to the discoveries and conceptual changes which can take place in science and, if this is claimed, provides us with an understanding of what would be meant by such a 'common understanding'- which on the one hand seems to include reference to scientific understanding but is at the same time immune to certain scientific changes and developments -it would appear that to continue to search for a natural explanation would be the rational thing to do. What other reference can there be than to the laws and theories of science when the event is described as 'conceptually impossible'? And, furthermore, given the developments and advances which can occur in scientific theory there is surely a 'loophole' here for the objector who believes the event may yet receive a natural explanation - a natural cause for the event may yet be found. Thus, I think, we would have to disagree with Holland when he claims that he has pinpointed circumstances

> "in respect to which the expression 'occurrence of something which is conceptually impossible' would have a natural enough use ... or ... the expression 'violation of a law of nature' could also be introduced quite naturally in this connection." (187)

Holland has failed to provide us with an understanding of 'conceptually impossible' that would achieve his task and thus he has failed to provide us with criteria such that we could identify a particular event as a violation of natural law.

For Holland, as we saw, 'a conflict of certainties is a necessary but not a sufficient condition of the miraculous'. The other necessary condition is provided when reference is made to "the religious background". (188) What does Holland mean here by a 'religious background'? Is it a reference to the divine agency involved in a miraculous event? Hardly, because as Holland informs us:

> "It is not part of my case that to regard a sequence of events ... as miraculous is to construe it as if it were a sort of action, or to see the invisible hand of a super person at work in it." (189)

Indeed, as M. Diamond has pointed out, this illustrates the interesting twist in Holland's argument. That is:

> "Instead of arguing from within the religious framework by insisting that 'To God all things are possible' he argues for the supernaturalist interpretation on the basis of the well being of the scientific enterprise. He insists that biological and physiological theories of nourishment are so well established that they are

> fundamental to our common sense conceptual schemes ... To sacrifice the fundamental principles and theories of nourishment in the effort to square scientific theory with this utterly aberrant observation would ... be too high a price to pay." (190)

What then is involved in a reference to a religious background? To illustrate this Holland asks us to imagine him levitating.

> "Suppose, however, that by rising into the air I were to avoid an otherwise certain death: then it would against a religious background become possible to speak of a miracle just as it would in what I called the contingency case." (191)

But surely part of this 'religious background' would include a belief in the possibility of direct divine activity in the world and, in the specific case mentioned, a belief that it was due to the direct causal activity or intervention of God that Holland violated natural laws, rose into the air. And further, the criterion employed to identify such an event as a miracle or an act of God would be discovered by reference to the known will and nature of God. That is, God being a good and compassionate God, the relief of suffering, distress etc. would be the <u>kind</u> of acts that he would perform. Now with regard to the employment of such a criterion Holland says nothing, though he does refer us to his discussion of his 'contingency concept' of the miraculous where apparently he has gone into the matter in more detail. So let us turn, first of all, to see what Holland understands by a 'contingency concept of miracle', and then examine further what he has to say about the religious background to such events. Holland provides the following example.

> "A child riding his toy motor-car strays on to an unguarded railway crossing near his house and a wheel of his car gets stuck down the side of one of the rails. An express train is due to pass with the signals in its favour and a curve in the track makes it impossible for the driver to stop his train in time to avoid any obstruction he might encounter on the crossing. The mother coming out of the house to look for her child sees him on the crossing and hears the train approaching. She runs forward shouting and waving. The little boy remains seated in his car looking downward engrossed in the task of pedalling it free. The brakes of the train are applied and it comes to rest a few feet from the child. The mother thanks God for the miracle; which she never ceases to think of as such although, as she in due course learns, there was nothing supernatural about the manner in which the brakes of the train came to be applied. The driver had fainted ... and the brakes were applied automatically as his hand ceased to exert pressure on the control lever. He fainted ... because his blood pressure had risen ... and the change in the blood pressure caused a clot of blood to be dislodged and circulate. He fainted at the time when he did on the afternoon in question because this was the time at which the coagulation in his blood stream reached the brain." (192)

Note that everything that occurs has a perfectly natural explanation. There is a natural explanation for the train stopping where it did and a natural explanation for the child being where he was.

> "The spacio-temporal coincidence ... the fact that the child was on the line at the time when

> the train approached and the train stopped a few feet short of the place where he was, is exactly ... a coincidence." (193)

But it is an impressive and significant coincidence "because the life of a child was imperilled and then, against expectation, preserved." (194)

First of all, it is obvious that the event or rather series of events were not brought about by direct divine activity in the world. As Holland himself says: "it cannot without confusion be taken as a sign of divine interference with the natural order." (195) If we are going to talk of God as an agent at all in relation to this series of events we must be thinking of God as the sustaining agent of all there is, as a necessary condition, in this sense, of these events occurring. But note, however, that in this sense God is not only the necessary condition of these particular events occurring but He is also the necessary condition for the occurrence of all events. Again, if it is argued that God as a provident sustaining God so arranged for this coincidence to occur then, in this sense, it must be acknowledged that all events are equally ordained by God.

What then could be meant by identifying such an event or series of events as a miracle? We are told the mother does identify the event as a miracle even though she knows there is a perfectly natural explanation or explanations of the series of events. Obviously then she does not believe there has been a violation or violations of natural law. But what criteria could she employ to identify such a series of events as miraculous? It seems obvious that she would then be identifying

such a series of events as miraculous because she believes the occurrence of these events would be in accord with the nature or character of God. God, being the kind of God He is, would 'produce' the kind of events which have occurred. Evidence that such criteria must be the criteria employed here to identify the events as miraculous could be found if we imagine Holland's example differing slightly in detail. Allow the train not to stop just prior to the child's position on the track but a few feet the other side of where the child is. Or, an even more remarkable coincidence, the train stops right on top of the child. Now obviously the mother would not regard such an event as a miracle, an event for which she thanks God. Such an event would not be in keeping with the known character or nature of God. God, the all good and compassionate God, could not be the agent of such an act.

Now note this difficulty if such a criterion is being employed here. God, in this example, is no more the agent of these particular series of events than he is for any other series of events - there is no direct divine activity involved - and to say God is an agent in any sense here is simply to refer to the sustaining activity of God, by which He can be regarded as a necessary condition for the occurrence of all events. Thus given the non-existence of direct divine activity violating the natural order to bring about a desired series of events it seems that it would be impossible or indeed quixotic to claim to be able to identify such a series of events as indeed instances of miraculous events by reference to the character or nature of God. God is no more responsible for bringing these particular events about than any other

event in the world or, the reverse of the coin, God is every bit as much responsible for bringing about all events and not just certain alleged special events. Thus in the absence of direct divine activity, if the events which have occurred are not violations of the natural order, it would seem to be impossible to validly employ criteria which claim to be able to identify events as miraculous inasmuch as they are in keeping with the known will and nature of God. Further, it would seem pointless to thank God for the occurrence of such particular events unless one was prepared to thank God for all events which occur.

What does Holland have to say about the religious background to such coincidences? He states:

> "The significance of some coincidences as opposed to others arises from their relation to human needs and hopes and fears, their effects for good or ill upon our lives. So we speak of our luck (fortune, fate etc.). And the kind of thing that, outside religion, we call luck is in religious parlance the grace of God or a miracle of God. But while the reference here is the same, the meaning is different. The meaning is different in that whatever happens ... by a miracle is something for which God is thanked or thankable ... all of which can only take place against the background of a religious tradition." (196)

But surely, to repeat, if 'God is thanked or thankable' this is so because, as the 'religious tradition' would inform us, God is in some sense thought of as the agent of the act, as responsible for the act. Certainly, too, while it is true that the relation of such coincidences to human needs, hopes

and fears is important, something more is needed to identify such coincidences as miracles. Surely it is because it is believed (a) that God is active as in some sense a causal agent and (b) that such coincidences are the kind of events which are in keeping with the divine nature and will that such coincidences are identified as miraculous. The beliefs may be mistaken beliefs here, for the reasons already given, but they do illustrate that it is because it is believed that the 'reference' is different that the 'meaning' is claimed to be different too.

For Holland such 'coincidence miracles' do not involve 'divine interference with the natural order' and the contrast is then made with the 'violation concept' of miracle and the clear implication, although unstated, is that miracles which involve 'violations of the natural order' are products of divine interference in the world. And yet, as we have seen, for Holland, it is a mistake to see such events as if they were a product of some kind of action, as if some 'super person' were at work here. Indeed for Holland generally, the puzzle is to understand "what difference would (the existence of a special existent) make to the character of the practice (of religion)" (197) and I suppose, in particular, in the case of a miracle, what difference would the existence of a 'special agent' make to our desire and ability to identify events as miraculous. One is inclined to say 'Everything'. Because surely it is only if it is believed that a personal God is or can be active in the world as an agent, can act directly in the world violating the natural order, that criteria could even conceivably be employed to identify which particular

events are to be thought of as miraculous. (Whether or not the 'violation concept of the miraculous' is a possible concept or whether or not the criteria mentioned can be in fact employed to identify miraculous events understood in this sense, should I suspect, be answered in the negative.) Thus I do not think that Holland has made good his claim that an intelligible account can be given of the notion of miracle which makes no reference to the idea of God as an agent.

vi

A MODEL OF TRANSCENDENCE

Perhaps, however, the greatest worry one has about such an account of God's 'otherness from the world' is not merely whether Phillips has plotted the logic of 'God' correctly, whether his so-called 'supernaturalistic concept of God' is an adequate conception of the God to be found in the Christian tradition; but, more fundamentally, has he not denied the objective reality of God?

Now Rhees considers the objection that the account of the reality of God which he gives denies God's objective reality. He states:

> "You say that 'I deny that the term 'God' stands for any objective reality in the literal sense.' I cannot have said just that, because the phrase 'objective reality' is one which I can almost never understand, and I try to avoid it. I have not denied the reality of God (I can make nothing of the phrase 'in the literal sense': certainly I was not introducing any 'figurative sense'). I have said that if we do speak of the reality of God, this is not like speaking of the reality of the milky way, any more than it is like speaking of the reality of flying saucers. I probably said something like 'God is not an <u>object</u>'. And this is a <u>grammatical</u> proposition, of course ... By 'an object' I was thinking first of all of something life a galaxy or a sound." (198)

Phillips, however, considers the issue rather more seriously and postulates three possible accounts of the objection. First of all, he asks, is the objector

> "suggesting that the believer creates his belief ... This is obviously not the case. The believer is taught religious beliefs. He does not create a tradition but is born into one." (199)

This is fair enough except it is hardly the point which the objector had in mind. The second 'account' of the objection which Phillips examines is that which claims that, if what Phillips says is true, "it is impossible to be mistaken about the nature of God." (200) Again, however, Phillips rejects what is claimed here, having in mind I presume some such passage as the following:

> "The individual, then, cannot say that anything is the will of God. What can conceivably be said to be the will of God is determined by prevailing beliefs about God. In short, God's nature is the grammar of God's will." (201)

If it is a passage like this Phillips has in mind one wonders if, in an important sense, there is not a point to the objection? Thirdly, Phillips considers the objection as referring to a "statement which I should support - namely the statement that God is not an object. That is a statement of grammar." (202) Now of course God is not an object in the sense in which tables and chairs are objects, but surely He must be thought to exist in some sense independently of his creation, the world, and the objects existing in the world? Surely what is meant by God's 'otherness from the world' cannot adequately be articulated in terms of what is involved for an individual to display eternal or selfless love? Indeed, as R. Trigg correctly comments on Phillips' argument here:

> "The most interesting point in all this is that he does not consider the most natural interpre-

> tation of the objection, which is that the existence of God is in no way dependent on our individual or our collective thought. This is an indispensable part of the concept of the Christian God." (203)

Further, in a discussion with J. R. Jones, Phillips, using the term 'picture' in very much the same sense as Wittgenstein uses it in his Lectures on Religious Belief, puts forward the claim that we can talk of a picture of the divine. Further, he also claims that it is nonsense to believe that "independently of the picture, we have a notion of divinity." (204) Or indeed, furthermore, and crucial in this context, it is equally nonsense to believe these pictures are "pictures 'of' anything." (205)

> "So the difference between a man who does and a man who does not believe in God is like the difference between a man who does and a man who does not believe in a picture." (206)

Now there surely is an immediate difficulty here for Phillips, because, as Jones points out, could this claim

> "have the implication that when the picture, which is a picture of the divine, as it were, which is God ... is corroded by doubts and scepticism then the picture can be said to have died; but that when the picture dies ... that in a sense, on your own presuppositions, God could be said to have died." (207)

Now Phillips appreciates the difficulty here but suggests, first of all, that the desire to say "that God dies is literal mindedness attempting to reassert itself." (208) By that comment I take Phillips to mean that the mistake here being made is that the objector is thinking of the picture as a picture

'of' something - a literal picture. (209) But if Phillips responds in this way isn't he only emphasising the point of the original difficulty? Isn't he committed to saying that if the picture dies, God in a sense dies? Phillips replies:

> "The point is that from within the picture something can be said now about such a time, that is, a time when people might turn their backs on it altogether. What can be said is that in such a time, people will have turned their backs on God. In other words, if people believe, there is nothing within belief which allows them to say that God can die. What they say is that there may come a time when people will turn their backs on God." (210)

But surely they can say more here? It isn't merely the case that people have turned their backs on God, but, given that the divinity, what it means to affirm God as real, is <u>constituted</u> by the picture or pictures held, if the pictures die, God dies. Of course people who believe <u>now</u> may refer to this as people turning their back on God,but if the implication of saying this is that God exists, whether or not people believe in Him or use the pictures of divinity, then it certainly cannot be allowed <u>given</u> Phillips' characterization and use of the term 'picture'. Furthermore,as R. Trigg has pointed out,

> "the very picture which according to Phillips, allows believers to talk of people turning their backs on God itself presupposes that God can exist when people ignore Him. Although he wants to avoid thinking of God as existing apart from the pictures which believers have, the pictures themselves demand that this happen." (211)

Now Rhees feels that in general terms he has an answer to this problem if it is presented as an objection to the kind of account both he and Phillips wish to present. It seems to be the case that, if we accept the account of the reality of God both Phillips and Rhees wish to present us with, we must deny that the term 'God' stands for or refers to any extra-mental reality. Rhees says:

> "If you ask, 'Well, when we are talking about God, does our language not refer to anything?' Then I should want to begin ... by emphasising something of the special grammar of this language. Otherwise it is natural to think of the way in which our physical object language may refer to something."

But what is the special grammar of this language? To illustrate this special grammar Rhees continues:

> "I should want to say something about what it is to 'talk about God', and how different this is from talking about the moon, or talking about a new house, or talking about the Queen. How different the 'talking about' is, I mean. That is a difference in grammar." (212)

But it is just here where we most need enlightenment that both Phillips and Rhees are at their most disappointing. What is raised as a serious issue for discussion appears to be deflected into mere hints or suggestions for argument and discussion. One would like a more positive account of the 'special' grammar involved here. Discussions are too often cut short with remarks like 'That is a statement of grammar', 'That is a difference in grammar' etc.

Indeed, Phillips' account and argument here has led one philosopher, A. Brunton, in a recent article (213) to suggest that there may be a close affinity or analogy between the work of G. Ryle in The Concept of Mind (214) and the analysis of religious language Phillips presents us with. What prompts Brunton to make this claim is that he believes that what Ryle presents us with in The Concept of Mind is an adverbial model for the concept of 'mind'. That is, Brunton states:

> "I call this a model, since to understand Ryle's book without its wealth of detail is to understand a radical change-over from 'mental' concepts understood substantivally - the Will, the Mind, the Imagination - to those same concepts understood adverbially - wilfully, intelligently, imaginatively." (215)

Now the analogy which Brunton claims to see between this 'adverbial approach' of Ryle and Phillips' work he expresses in the following manner.

> "All I wish to suggest is that, if we interpret Phillips' statements about God adverbially, with the corresponding modifications for religious thought in general (the concepts of 'prayer', 'eternity', 'Judgement', 'Heaven', 'Hell' would all be affected), then we shall be logically illuminated." (216)

That is, what Brunton is suggesting is that,

> "just as Ryle argues that there are not Minds and Bodies, but rather persons who act intelligently, stupidly, imaginatively, woodenly, Phillips argues that there are not persons and God (Himself either a Person or else a strangely, non-finite, non-three-dimensional Super-Person) but rather persons who have the divine spirit (know God), and those who don't." (217)

And of course to have this divine spirit is, as we have seen, to express eternal love, love in a selfless way.

Now it appears to me that this analogy is not only imaginative but also enlightening. But is it fruitful? Brunton believes it is fruitful in two respects. First of all, it is fruitful in that

> "a bold acceptance by Phillips of the adverbial model would put paid, once and for all ... to the criticism (already stated) of the wide gap between Phillips' views and what is actually believed by the Saints, Church Fathers and professing Christians in general." (218)

That is, Christian believers have normally believed that their faith made assertions both about the nature of man and of the world. Their faith consisted of belief in an actually existing God, the creator of the universe. At least, as Brunton states, "if we accept the adverbial analysis we shall see more clearly where we stand." (219) And to be honest Phillips' writings at times <u>do</u> make it reasonably clear where <u>he</u> stands. I have in mind such statements as

> "God's reality is independent of any given believer, but its independence is not the independence of a separate biography;"
>
> "For the believer, love itself is the real object of the relationship between himself and another person. This love is the Spirit of God, and to possess it is to walk with God."

Or again,

> "God is not contemplated directly, but through ... forms of the implicit love of God. One such form is love of one's neighbour:"

> "Seeing that there is a God is synonymous with seeing the possibility of eternal love ... To possess this love is to possess God." (220)

What, however, is often annoying with Phillips' work is that he still retains the descriptive grammatical form of religious assertions [though Rhees, at least, admits that he does not, as we saw, lay 'emphasis ... on the fact that 'God' is a substantive'] such that the impression is often given that it is the case, despite appearances, that what is being described or talked about is some kind of entity called God.

However, if we remain with and accept the adverbial account we shall at least see the futility of attacking Phillips' views because they either do not meet some standard of orthodoxy or appear to conflict with the actual beliefs of Christian believers. Though, given Phillips' claim that he is merely articulating what certain religious beliefs mean within the Christian tradition to Christian religious believers, Brunton's admonishment here is timely:

> "Whether this is a plausible view will depend both on what Jesus and many other individuals have said and on our interpretation of their words. Here one, including Phillips, can only be honest and remember to distinguish between what we take to be the beliefs of individuals and what we regard as the most profound elements in these beliefs and the best way of interpreting them." (221)

The second way in which Brunton considers his analogy to be fruitful is that, if applied, it can help to explicate in a fuller fashion the nature of the difficulties which Phillips himself finds in his own position. The particular difficulty

which Phillips articulates, and Brunton refers to, is the following.

> "I wanted to say that the man who loves God cannot be touched by the world, by how things are. ... The biggest objection to this way of talking comes from the fact that affliction can destroy the possibility of loving God. So it seems that the believer cannot say that all is well no matter what happens, since if certain things happen he can no longer believe. On the other hand, would believers say that God had deserted a man, if the affliction which destroys his faith is itself the consequence of loving God?" (222)

The sentence which Brunton believes would be particularly clarified, if his analogy were applied here, would be the last sentence of the quotation. It would then read:

> "'Would believers say that a man who loves unselfishly has ceased to love unselfishly if whatever destroyed his love was itself the consequence of this love?' There is only one answer, 'Yes'." (223)

Thus I think on both counts we can regard Brunton's analogy as not only fruitful but also enlightening. But, having said that, doesn't that commit me to claiming that Phillips is presenting a <u>reductionist</u> account of religious belief and language, and in particular reducing religious belief and language into moral belief and language? And of course the writings of R. B. Braithwaite came to mind here. For doesn't Braithwaite reduce religious belief to moral belief when he states:

> "A moral belief is an intention to behave in a certain way: a religious belief is an intention

> to behave in a certain way (a moral belief) together with the entertainment of certain stories associated with the intention in the mind of the believer." (224)

Now can we rest content with classifying Phillips and Braithwaite here together? Hasn't indeed Phillips claimed, in opposition to the position of Braithwaite, that "the very reason behind the believer's dependence on God is the recognition of the limits of moral resolution"? (225) Indeed there is a sense here in which one is tempted to say that while Braithwaite 'demotes' religious belief into moral belief, Phillips 'elevates' a certain kind of moral belief into religious belief.

P. Helm, aware of this difficulty here, suggests two senses of reductionism in religion which may help to clarify the issue. He suggests that the Phillips type reductionism would be a

> "thesis analysing transcendent terms into immanent terms. Such an analysis does not <u>necessarily</u> involve any denial of the transcendent character of God, but offers a certain model as an elucidation of the transcendence of God."

This account should be read with Helm's remark that "ontologically speaking, Phillips does not wish to get rid of anything." A Braithwaitian-type reductionism would be

> "a thesis analysing transcendent terms into immanent terms without remainder. This is not simply to offer a <u>model</u> of transcendence ... but to claim in effect, that the transcendent-sounding language of religion means nothing over and above certain immanent states of affairs." (226)

Now while I can sympathise with Helm's attempts to differentiate the different senses in which Phillips' and Braithwaite's accounts of religious belief are reductionist, I cannot agree with his classification as it stands. Phillips we are told, 'ontologically speaking does not want to get rid of anything'. Well, I know his writings are at times obscure , but, with reference to the reasons already given, it does seem that he wants to deny the reality of God understood as any kind of individual entity or being. Now I suspect Helm might reply here that all Phillips is trying to achieve is

> "to correct or reform religious language according to the supposed 'grammar' of religion. This reductionism is a proposal within religion, and amounts to the provision of a new model for the understanding of, for example, divine transcendence, given the (for Phillips) unacceptable model of classical theism." (227)

However the 'fact' that the attempt to reform religious language is allegedly internally based does not detract from the fact that the new model of transcendence, provided by Phillips, essentially involves reducing statements allegedly about God into statements of moral beliefs and attitudes. I suspect Helm is guilty here of allowing Phillips to (to put the matter colloquially here) have his cake and eat it.

Thus, while one must and should be aware of the differing intentions, aims and indeed understandings of religious beliefs and practices as exemplified in the work of Phillips and Braithwaite one should not gloss over the full implications of their analyses. If, as for Phillips, 'seeing that there is a

God' is synonymous with 'seeing the possibility of eternal love', which would appear to suggest that for Phillips the statement 'God exists' means or is identified with the statement 'Eternal love exists', then, surely, we do have a reduction of religious language and belief to moral language and belief — a reduction, indeed, very similar in kind to Braithwaite's when he states "I believe in God" means "I intend to follow an agapeistic way of life". (228)

Indeed the reductionist nature of Phillips' thesis is seen most clearly in his remarks on Immortality and, in particular, in his specific rejection of belief in survival after death as being a necessary component of a religious belief in Immortality. I want now to turn to examine Phillips' elucidation of the nature of Immortality, his account of what it means to believe in Immortality or eternal life. In particular I think the following point will be illustrated. Just as 'coming to see that there is a God' finds its expression in certain moral beliefs, "coming to see the possibility of such love amounts to the same thing as coming to see the possibility of belief in God," (229) so, similarly, 'participating in Immortality', for Phillips, also finds its expression, its content, in moral beliefs, in the very same moral beliefs. There is a "certain kind of love, to possess which is to know God and to have eternal life." "To possess this love is to know God, to have eternal life, to become subjective." (230) Thus, what it means to believe in God, what it means to believe in eternal life or Immortality are conflated. In practising a self-less morality one is 'participating in God's reality', one

is participating in Immortality - this is what for Phillips Immortality means. One is viewing life under a certain moral perspective. One is viewing life 'sub specie aeternitatis'.

via

IMMORTALITY

> "Not only is there no guarantee of the temporal immortality of the human soul, that is to say of its eternal survival after death; but, in any case, this assumption completely fails to accomplish the purpose for which it has always been intended. Or is some riddle solved by my surviving for ever? Is not this eternal life as much of a riddle as our present life?" (231)

> "Christianity speaks of overcoming the world. But in what sense is it overcome? According to Christianity, it is overcome by a certain kind of love, to possess which is to know God and to have eternal love." (232)

For D. Z. Phillips the greatest mistake possible which can be made in religious discussions of the Immortality of the Soul is to assume that a belief in Immortality, in eternal life, entails some kind of belief in survival after death. All such ideas of existence after death, whether that existence be thought of as the existence of a physical body, a non-material body or a disembodied existence, face insuperable difficulties. For Phillips the notion of Immortality, understood as entailing survival after death, is the product of a number of mistakes: "mistakes about the grammar of concepts such as 'self', 'I', 'existence', 'death', 'personal identity' etc." (233) And yet, as Geach reminds us:

> "The traditional faith of Christianity, inherited from Judaism, is that at the end of this age Messiah will come and men rise from their graves

> to die no more. That faith is not going to be shaken by inquiries about bodies burned to ashes or eaten by beasts; those who might well suffer just such death in martyrdom were those who were most confident of a glorious reward in the resurrection. One who shares that hope will hardly wish to take out an occultistic or philosophical insurance policy, to guarantee some sort of survival as an annuity, in case God's promise of resurrection should fail." (234)

Now Phillips rejects Geach's characterization of the Christian belief in Immortality. Rather, he asks:

> "what if belief in the immortality of the soul so far from being the product of prudence, has close connections with moral beliefs? What if belief in the immortality of the soul does not entail belief in survival after death?" (235)

Phillips, in other words, wishes to develop an account of Immortality which is consistent with his rejection of the possibility of surviving death.

In developing his account of Immortality Phillips asks us to consider such expressions as 'He was a good soul' or 'I'm sorry for the poor old soul'. He continues:

> "To say of someone, 'He'd sell his soul for money' is a perfectly natural remark. It in no way entails any philosophical theory about a duality in human nature. The remark is a moral observation about a person, one which expresses the degraded state that person is in. A man's soul in this context, refers to his integrity, to the complex set of practices and beliefs which acting with integrity would cover for that person. Might not talk about the immortality of the soul play a similar role?" (236)

But before one can talk about the state of a man's soul should one not establish that he has a soul to be in such a state, and, furthermore, surely it is only when we have established that souls do exist, that we can then proceed to discuss their state or whether, for example, they can survive after death? Now for Phillips such objections are based on a radical confusion. This is so because such an assertion as

> "'Every man has a soul' has been construed as if it were akin to 'Every man has a heart'. Once this has been done, the endless qualifications begin: it is a substance, but an incorporeal one, and so on. The questions also begin: 'Show me the soul - can its position be located?'"

Rather, Phillips claims:

> "if we ask ourselves when we would consider whether a man has a soul or not, we see that this has nothing to do with any kind of empirical question. It is not like asking whether he has a larynx or not ... an investigation as to whether a man has a soul or not, or into the state his soul is in, has nothing to do with the location or examination of an object. Questions about the state of a man's soul are questions about the kind of life he is living ... The relation between the soul and how a man lives is not a contingent one. It is when a man sinks to depths of bestiality that someone might say that he had lost his soul ... Talk about the soul, then, is not talk about some strange sort of 'thing'. On the contrary, it is a kind of talk bound up with certain moral or religious reflections a man may make on the life he is leading." (237)

Thus it would appear that, for Phillips, to ask a question about the state of one's soul is to ask a question about the

state of one's life. But how is the state of one's soul to be assessed in a religious sense? "For the believer," Phillips claims,

> "the state of his soul has to do with its possession or lack of spirituality, this spirituality being assessed in terms of the person's relationship to God ... The state of a believer's soul is seen by him in the light of its relation to beliefs in the Fatherhood and Love of God. The notions of the fatherhood and love of God constitute eternal life, the life of God, towards which the soul aspires." (238)

Further, just as in discussing the nature of God's otherness from the world, so here too, when discussing what it means for the believer to aspire to eternal life, Phillips makes reference to Plato's work in the Phaedo and once again emphasises the notion of purification as turning from the temporal to the eternal.

> "The man who is a prey to the temporal, for Plato, is the man who is at the mercy of his desires and passions ... Plato speaks of the man who is at the mercy of his desires as one who lacks order in his soul. Order is given through bringing to bear an unchanging demand on the flux of desires. This demand is the demand of decency." (239)

Accepting this account we can now see why, for Phillips, it would be foolish to speak of eternal life as some kind of extra bonus or addition to human existence, something which happens after human life on earth is apparently over. Rather, "eternal life is the reality of goodness, that in terms of which human life is to be assessed." (240) The difference between the man who desires eternal life in this sense and a man who does not

would not be anything like the difference between a man who believes he will survive death and a man who does not think that he will survive death. The difference, rather, will be displayed in the attitudes they hold to their respective lives.

> "In one man, his desires and appetites would be, or would be aimed at being, subordinate to moral considerations, while in the other they would reign unchecked. Just as in the case of determining the state of a man's soul, so in the case of determining whether someone has a regard for the eternal what needs to be examined is the kind of life he is living." (241)

Given this context in which "one kind of talk about eternal life and Immortality has its home," one can see how puzzles concerning whether or not one can survive death are irrelevant:

> "Eternity is not an extension of this present life, but a mode of judging it. Eternity is not more life, but this life seen under certain moral and religious modes of thought." (242)

However, Phillips is not altogether happy with this account of eternal life primarily because the conclusions reached "are insufficient as an analysis of religious conceptions of eternal life and the immortality of the soul." (243) It is not so much that what has been said so far about Immortality has no relevance to religious belief, that is certainly not the case: but, for Phillips, the specific religious notions of Immortality are "closely connected with the idea of overcoming death" and it is to an analysis of this specific idea that Phillips feels he now must turn. (244)

How then is death overcome in this religious sense? Not, as we might expect, by 'surviving death', as it were. To think

in this way, for Phillips, would be to reduce the status of death to the status of a kind of sleep from which one hopes to be aroused to a new and better life.

> "Then the lesson religious believers see in death is lost, since death no longer reveals the fact that there is to be no compensation, but is seen as an additional fact for which compensation must be sought." (245)

Rather,

> "death's lesson for the believer is to force him to recognise what all his rational instincts want to resist, namely, that he has no claims on the way things go." (246)

The specific religious notion of Immortality, for Phillips, is best expressed in terms of the contrast between the desire for compensation and the religious conception of dying to the self. This representing the contrast between the temporal (the concern with self), and the eternal (the concern with self-renunciation). That is,

> "the immortality of the soul ... refers to a person's relation to the self-effacement and love of others involved in dying to the self. Death is overcome in that dying to the self is the meaning of the believer's life." (247)

What, in effect, Phillips is suggesting is that

> "eternal life for the believer is participating in the life of God, and that this life has to do with dying to the self, seeing that all things are a gift from God, that nothing is ours by right or necessity." (248)

And the connexion between the Immortality of the Soul and eternal life is the following.

> "The immortality of the soul refers to the state an individual is in in relation to the unchanging reality of God. It is in this way that the notion of the immortality of the soul and of eternal life go together." (249)
>
> "Eternity is not more life, but this life seen under certain moral and religious modes of thought. This is precisely what seeing this life sub specie aeternitatis would amount to." (250)

But all this tells us something only about the relation of an individual to 'God' during this life. Nothing is said of the 'destiny of the soul after death', and, since this is an important part of what has been meant by the Immortality of the Soul in the Christian tradition, the account offered must surely be rejected as inadequate. One might be tempted to say, bearing in mind the traditional belief that Immortality entails survival after death, that if the philosophical analysis of the notion of Immortality given by Phillips is anywhere near the truth, the whole notion is an illusion. For both the believer and the unbeliever the end will be the same. Neither are going to survive their deaths. Now Phillips accepts this, but asks:

> "Why should we assume that the difference between a believer and an unbeliever consists in this? The objector may see no point in living according to God's commands unless there is such a difference. In that case, we are back to the desire for compensation. When Jesus saw men eaten up by pride, he said that they have their reward; that is, that is all their lives amount to; they are wedded to the temporal." (251)

Thus, just as to 'see there is a God' is to 'see the possibility of eternal selfless love', so, to 'see the possibility of eternal selfless love' is to see what Immortality or eternal life means. Yet even if such an account were accepted by philosophers of what it means to have a religious belief in Immortality, of what it means to say there is a God, what could it mean to say that such beliefs are true? What would it mean to ask whether, e.g., a belief in the Immortality of the Soul was true or not? With reference to the argument already presented by Phillips, we can see that the question of truth in <u>this</u> context has little to do with believing it to <u>be the case</u>, a fact, that people <u>do</u> survive death. Many philosophers of religion, however, would believe that if this fact is not a component of the belief this would prevent such a belief from being classified as in any way a <u>true</u> belief. Furthermore, as Phillips himself relates, they may feel

> "that if religious believers were told that belief in Immortality was divorced from such an expectation and independent of it, the belief would lose its hold on them immediately." (252)

Thus I would like to explore what Phillips has to say concerning the status of truth claims for religious beliefs. What does it mean to say, for Phillips, that belief in Immortality is a <u>true</u> belief? But before discussing this, and as an aid to our discussion of religious truth, I would like to analyse Phillips' account of the nature of religious belief and religious epistemology in general.

CHAPTER 3

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

> "The saint and the atheist do not interpret the same world in different ways. They see different worlds." (1)

This is a rather startling claim made by Phillips. What could it possibly mean to say that the 'saint and atheist see <u>different</u> worlds'? Perhaps his meaning will be a little clearer if I expand the above quotation a little more. The quotation then reads:

> "Philosophers speak as if one had some constant factors called the 'phenomena', of which religion and humanism are competing interpretations. But what are these phenomena? Religious language is not an interpretation of how things are, but determines how things are for the believer. The saint and atheist ..."

Now two things are clear from this. First of all, religion does <u>not</u> provide an <u>alternative</u> interpretation of the phenomena which somehow competes with the interpretation of that same phenomena given by humanism, and, secondly religious language determines <u>how</u> things are for the believer. The clear implication appears to be here that it is most unlikely that there is <u>any one agreed account</u> of the <u>facts</u>, the phenomena. Rather, in the case of religion, religious belief determines <u>how things are</u> and in the case of humanism, humanistic belief determines <u>how things are</u> and, this being the case, they cannot possibly both be competing interpretations of one and the same set of facts.

Other remarks of Phillips which seem to be relevant in this context are: "The beliefs (religious) assess the facts, not the facts the beliefs"; "worship of God makes the believer's relationship to other people and the events which befall him substantially different"; and an approving quote from Winch which reads, "the concepts we have settle for us the form of experience we have of the world." (2)

Now P. Sherry (3) in his discussion of these remarks maintains that he finds it difficult to grasp Phillips' argument here. He states:

> "Phillips is using ontological terms like 'things' and 'world', yet he makes no attempt at ontological analysis (similarly, he asserts that the meaning of terms like 'exist' and 'real' is context dependent, but he does not relate the different uses to each other). Phillips is clearly right in insisting that our beliefs may affect the way we experience the world and, in some cases, the way things happen (particularly in the realm of human relationships). All the same, there are certain facts which are the case regardless of how we think, feel or behave: facts about historical events, nature and the basic requirements of human life. Phillips ... is wrong in suggesting that our responses can somehow change them ..." (4)

Now Sherry's critical comments here are well taken especially when we further see Phillips' claim, concerning the religious believer, that "without his belief he could not be said to ... experience the same events." (5) Indeed Phillips' remarks here have led certain philosophers to claim that Phillips is advocating a form of 'conceptual relativism'.

Conceptual relativism, or what is meant by being a conceptual relativist, is

> "to argue that what is to count as knowledge, evidence, truth, a fact, an observation, making sense and the like is uniquely determined by the linguistic framework used and that linguistic frameworks can and do radically vary. What we can know about the world and what we will take to be intellgible and the basic facts in the case is completely moulded by the linguistic framework we use." (6)

And for K. Nielsen, Phillips is a representative conceptual relativist. Again, R. Trigg has identified Phillips as such a conceptual relativist (7) and for him, an implication of a conceptual relativist position is that "different concepts ... mean a different world, so that what the world is like is relative to a conceptual system and the language of the system." (8) Indeed, it is in particular by referring to the original passage quoted from Phillips /the saint and atheist/ that Trigg specifically attempts to justify his assertion that Phillips is such a relativist.

However, I think Phillips' position is rather more complex than either of these philosophers have realised or indeed I have as yet portrayed. So far I have interpreted Phillips' remark that the saint and the atheist see <u>different worlds</u> as meaning that there can be different accounts of the 'facts' - there is no one agreed account of the facts - the saint provides his account and the atheist his account. Neither account is in competition with the other, providing a competing interpretation, because that would presuppose that there was some common phenomena of which their accounts would be in

competition. However, contrast this account of what it means for the saint and the atheist to see different **worlds** with this further passage from Phillips:

> "Both with the love of nature and love of human beings, the attitude of the deeply religious man is not determined by looking at things from the midst of them. To say that his attitude is other than this is what is meant by saying that his attitude is other than the world's way of regarding things. His view is of the world as a whole and determines the nature of the world for him. His world is a different world from that of a man who sees objects from the midst of them. How the world is is the same for both of them, but what they make of the world is different. This phrase, 'what they make of the world', has led some philosophers to speak of religious beliefs as attitudes to life. ... The believer's worship 'must make the world a wholly different one'. The world must, so to speak, wax or wane as a whole. As if by accession or loss of meaning." (9)

'How the world is is the same for both of them', 'but what they make of the world is different'. This statement would seem to imply that the facts of the matter, how the world is, is common to both the religious and non-religious man and, further, that their 'seeing different worlds' is a function of 'what they make of the world', their attitude to the world. Thus, in the case of the original passage quoted, the mistake made by 'certain philosophers' is to suppose that religious beliefs offer an interpretation of the phenomena. Indeed to say that 'religious language determines how things are for the believer' is simply to give expression to the

claim that the attitude of the religious man is an attitude or view of 'the world as a whole' and in this sense 'determines the nature of the world for him'. In the case of the religious man his attitude is not 'determined by looking at things from the midst of them' but is rather 'other than the world's way of regarding things'. His view is of the 'world as a whole' and his world is a 'different world' insofar as the world must 'wax or wane as a whole, as if by accession or loss of meaning'.

Now I would like to pause here to note a very interesting point. The above phrases 'looking at things from the midst of them', the 'world must wax or wane as a whole' are most certainly obscure but they are not, I should hope, unfamiliar. Because, as we saw, they represent the kind of viewpoint Wittgenstein felt in his Tractatus period of philosophy was definitive of a mystical attitude to life. They represent some of the mystical themes in the Tractatus. Now it seems to me that what D. Z. Phillips offers us in his 'religious philosophy' is a 'marriage' of the later philosophy, the later epistemology of Wittgenstein, with certain of the mystical themes of the Tractatus period. Let me explain more fully what I have in mind here. In Wittgenstein's Tractatus period the only significant propositions were factual propositions, propositions which were about 'what is the case', propositions which were in fact identified with the propositions of the natural sciences. There could be, as we saw, no significant religious or ethical propositions because religious and ethical claims were not concerned with 'how the world is', the facts - which are contingent, accidental - but with 'that

there is a world' - that which is 'higher' - that which is mystical. But Wittgenstein was 'under the oppressive tendency' to give content to, a characterization of the religious and ethical attitude and this account I have already presented. Now with the development of the later philosophy in the Investigations, factual statements ceased to be the only significant statements, the 'meaning of a word was its use in the language-game' and, accepting this, religious assertions could once again be re-admitted to significance. Religious sentences are apparently as verbalisable and meaningful as any other and are the content of the 'religious language games'; which 'games' themselves are an integral part of, or component of, the 'religious form(s) of life'.

Now in suggesting that Phillips' philosophical position should be viewed as a 'marriage' of the later philosophy or epistemology of Wittgenstein with certain of the mystical themes of the Tractatus period I am simply suggesting the following. Insofar as Phillips accepts the later theory of meaning, religious sentences being as meaningful as any other, an essential component of 'religious language games' and the religious form(s) of life and all that entails, he accepts the later philosophy. But there still remains the problem of giving a content to, a characterization of, the 'religious form(s) of life', of what it means to participate in this 'form of life'. The 'form of life' is distinctive, it is not reducible to any other, it constitutes part of the 'given'. But what constitutes seeing the world in a religious manner? Now insofar as Phillips accepts certain of the mystical passages and themes of the Tractatus and Notebooks as giving

an adequate characterization, a skeleton framework if you like, of what is involved in having a religious attitude to the world, I am suggesting he is accepting certain of these mystical themes of the Tractatus as giving a 'content' to the 'religious form of life', as providing an elucidation of what it means to view the world in a religious manner or way. Thus, in identifying Phillips' 'religious philosophy' as a 'marriage' of the later philosophy of Wittgenstein with some of the mystical themes of the Tractatus this is all I am intending to claim, or point out.

Now of course, in one sense, once the theoretical framework of the Tractatus is rejected, once the theory of the significant proposition and its relation to the facts is overthrown, certain or most of the so-called mystical themes, it would appear, must go too, or at the very least the precise articulation of them as given in the Tractatus and Notebooks. Indeed, as already noted, certain of the phrases used to give expression to certain of the mystical themes are hardly intelligible when divorced from the total context of the Tractarian philosophy. This much is true but, as already pointed out, for example, when Wittgenstein claimed that there were no significant ethical or religious propositions this did not follow from nor was it a mere consequence of the 'picture theory of meaning' unless the non-contingent nature of ethics and religion was antecedentally accepted. Thus there is a substantive ethical-religious position presupposed in the elucidation of the Tractatus theory and it is this position which Phillips elucidates and uses along with the Tractarian terminology in which it is expressed.

Indeed it seems to me that Phillips' characterization of the religious view of the world as seeing things 'sub specie aeterni', his identification of the question of the 'meaning of the world' with the question of the 'meaning of life' - a meaning which is not dependent on how things are - and so on, are all explicit uses of certain of the mystical themes in the Tractatus and Notebooks to illustrate what it means to participate in the 'religious form of life' and to view the world in a religious fashion. Indeed, Phillips' use of some of the mystical themes - such as the 'idea of the world waxing or waning as a whole as if by accession or loss of meaning' - are hardly intelligible unless one is at least aware of the fuller articulation and expression given to them in the Notebooks. This, indeed, is one reason why I took time to expound the mystical themes in Section 1, Part A. Further, it surely was obvious, when I was expounding Phillips' position on such issues as what is meant by God's 'otherness from the world' or what is meant by 'Immortality', how indebted Phillips' accounts in fact are to certain of the mystical themes of the Tractatus period.

Now having made these points I would like to return to the issue I was discussing. If the world of the religious man

is a 'different world' from the world of the non-religious man and if this difference is constituted by the fact that the world is 'meaningful' for the religious man (which, following Wittgenstein, as we have seen Phillips claim, means that life is meaningful, i.e. questions about the meaning of the world and life are one and the same), then to say that 'the world is different' for the religious man is to say neither more nor less than that he finds life meaningful. The 'different world' of the religious man, the meaningful world or life, is not determined by or dependent on, how things are in the world - or, more importantly, by a different 'account of the facts' - but rather is determined by the attitude or response of the religious man to the world as a whole, "the whole of life". (10) He finds life meaningful, or, to use Wittgenstein's phrase, he views the world or life 'sub specie aeterni'; being in agreement with the world, accepting the 'brute' factuality of the world. There is of course more to conceptual relativism than this, but, if being called a conceptual relativist entails that one maintains there can be no 'agreed account of the facts', no 'agreed knowledge claims', then Phillips is most certainly not a conceptual relativist. Rather, for Phillips, it is not the case that there are 'different accounts of the facts' but rather that there can be different responses to the facts. Or as Rhees states: "To think in a religious way is to have a certain view of human life; I do not think there is any thought about 'the world' apart from that." (11)

Phillips also refers to religion as a response not only to the 'whole of life' but also to events like birth or death. (12) He states:

> "Consider ... the example of the mother who reacts to the birth of her baby boy by an act of devotion to the Virgin Mary. It is true that the act of devotion could not be what it is without the birth of the baby, which, after all occasioned it. It is also true that the connection between the religious act and the baby's birth must not be fantastic. It must be shown not to be superstition." (13)

What does Phillips mean when he claims that the connection between the religious response, the act of devotion, to the birth of the baby and the physical fact of the baby's birth must not be fantastic? What indeed does Phillips mean when he says the religious responses must not be fantastic? He states:

> "Religion must take the world seriously ... religious responses are fantastic if they ignore or distort what we already know. What is said falls under standards of judgment with which we are already acquainted. When what is said by religious believers does violate the facts or distort our apprehension of situations, no appeal to the fact that what is said is said in the name of religion can justify or excuse the violation and distortion." (14)

Well certainly, this is clear confirmation, once again, that, for Phillips, the saints 'different world' is not a world in which his belief 'creates' or 'discovers' or indeed determines what are to be called facts. The facts are there - given - known to all, and religious belief is a response to

the facts. But what are the criteria by which we can determine whether a given response is fantastic or not? Well, I presume, obviously, responses are fantastic if they violate the facts, violate what we already know, and the criteria as such must then

> "not be in dispute. For example, some religious believers may try to explain away the reality of suffering, or try to say that all suffering has some purpose. When they speak like this, one may accuse them of not taking suffering seriously. Or if religious believers talk of death as if it were a sleep of long duration, one may accuse them of not taking death seriously. In these examples what is said about suffering and death can be judged in terms of what we already know and believe about these matters." (15)

It should be noted that similar arguments would illustrate that a response was <u>superstitious</u> for Phillips. What would characterise an act or response of devotion, on the birth of a baby, to the Virgin Mary, as superstitious? If there was

> "trust in non-existent, quasi-causal connections: the belief that someone long dead called the Virgin Mary can, if she so desires, determine the course of an individual's life, keep him from harm, make his ventures succeed." (16)

But why should this response be superstitious? It is superstitious because blunders and mistakes are being made

> "regarding causal connections of a kind. We can say that the people involved are reasoning wrongly, meaning by this that they contradict what we already know. The activities are brought

> under a system where theory, repeatability, explanatory force, etc. are important features and they are shown to be wanting, shown to be blunders." (17)

First of all, some comment on these remarks. I do not believe that those philosophers who have seriously examined the problem of evil as instanced in suffering, and developed theodocies, can be accused of <u>not</u> treating suffering seriously. Surely, in a very important sense, it is <u>because</u> they have treated suffering seriously that they have felt the need to attempt to account for it, to explain it. To explain suffering, to say that 'suffering has some purpose' is not to explain <u>away</u> suffering, or not necessarily. Secondly, the kind of religious responses which Phillips here labels as fantastic or superstitious represent the beliefs of traditional Christianity - the belief in a divine purpose or plan, the belief in divine agency, the belief that men do survive death. I would have thought that, for Christians, these beliefs would not be characterised as responses, never mind fantastic responses, but as beliefs in certain facts being the case; facts about the world and God's relationship to the world on the one hand, and facts concerning the eternal destiny of man on the other. The fact that such religious beliefs may contain a <u>factual</u> component isn't by itself sufficient to justify classifying such beliefs as superstitious. And, furthermore, whether or not the factual components of such beliefs do 'violate' already known facts is just what is in dispute. It is certainly not commonly accepted. Indeed one suspects that, for Phillips, [illegible] what would constitute superstition or 'fantastic connections'

with regard to religious beliefs is not merely that the factual components of such beliefs may violate 'already known facts', but the very existence of factual beliefs either as components of or necessary conditions of religious belief.

But if it is clear that the saints' 'different world' is not a world in which the saints' beliefs 'create the facts', what then is the relationship between the facts and the religious response? Is it perhaps the case that the facts in the world, known by all, determine or even perhaps provide the evidence to justify the religious response? To this claim Phillips responds in the following manner:

> "... it is also important to stress that the birth is not evidence from which one can assess the religious reaction to it. People react to the birth of a child in various ways. Some may say that the birth of a child is always a cause for rejoicing. Others may say that whether one rejoices at the birth of a child should be determined by the physical and mental health of the child ... Others may say that one should always give thanks to God when a child is born ... All these reactions are reactions to the birth of a child, and could not mean what they do apart from the fact of the birth. But it does not follow that the various reactions can be inferred from the birth, or that they are conclusions for which the birth of a baby is the ground. All one can say is that people do respond in this way. Many who respond in one way will find the other responses shallow, trivial, fantastic, meaningless or even evil. But the force of the responses cannot be justified in any external way; it can merely be shown." (18)

The facts of the world, then, cannot provide evidence in

favour of or against the validity of the religious response. Religious beliefs or responses are not justified by, nor can they be inferred from, the facts in the world. Allow me to explore a little further the nature of these religious beliefs or responses as Phillips sees them and their relation to the facts in the world. Phillips states:

> "To construe these beliefs (religious) as hypotheses which may or may not be true is to falsify their character. As Wittgenstein says: 'The point is that if there were evidence, this would in fact destroy the whole business.'" (19)

Now, in fact, Phillips believes it correct here to distinguish between external and internal evidence for a religious belief. The first kind, external evidence is illegitimate but the second kind, internal evidence, is quite legitimate. Phillips claims:

> "For the most part, in recent philosophy of religion, philosophers, believers, and non-believers alike, have been concerned with discovering the grounds of religious beliefs. Philosophy, they claim, is concerned with reasons; it considers what is to count as good evidence ofor a belief. In the case of religious beliefs, the philosopher ought to enquire into the reasons anyone could have for believing in the existence of God ... Many philosophers who argue in this way seem to be seeking for evidence or reasons for religious beliefs external to belief itself. It is assumed that such evidence and reasons would, if found, constitute the grounds of religious belief." (20)

By 'internal evidence' or reasons for belief in God Phillips seems to mean evidence or reasons which "come from

within religion, they presuppose the framework of Faith, and therefore cannot be treated as (external) evidence for religious belief",(21) and thus 'have not interested philosophers very much'. Examples of internal evidences or reasons given by Phillips are the following. "'I have had an experience of the living God', 'I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ', 'God saved me while I was a sinner', or 'I just can't help believing'." (22) We really do seem to have a motley collection of 'reasons' here. Let us briefly examine them.

With regard to the first,'I have had an experience of God', it certainly does provide a reason for belief but I doubt if it has simply or generally been regarded as an instance of an 'internal' evidence or reason for belief in Phillips' sense. Certainly, many philosophers have taken seriously the claim that an experience of God could constitute evidence or grounds for belief in God and have analysed the assertion accordingly. With regard to the second, 'I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ', this seems more like an affirmation of faith than a presentation of a reason for belief,whether internal or external. It is difficult to know why Phillips includes this assertion here. 'God saved me while I was a sinner' certainly gives a reason for belief. It states 'I believe in God because He saved me'. And it certainly seems to be an 'internal' evidence or reason because it is only within the 'framework' of faith that one could identify oneself as a sinner who requires saving. But then a difficulty arises. Because,surely one already has to see a use for, see significance in religious concepts and terms,i.e. sin, save, God, before one can feel the need to be saved from one's sins. But this is already to participate in

the 'religious form of life' and, if this is so, it seems difficult if not impossible to claim that one believes in God because he saved one. Finally, 'I just can't help believing'. It is difficult to see how this can be thought of as providing a reason for belief - rather it seems to point to the cause of one's belief. Indeed, if offered as a reply to the question, 'Why do you believe in God?' it would be taken, rightly, as a deflection of the question, as a refusal to answer either with an internal or external reason or evidence.

However, despite our difficulties with Phillips' examples of internal 'evidences' or reasons for belief in God, let us reflect back to his original remark on the question of evidence. There, we saw, he quoted approvingly Wittgenstein's remark that evidence, if it could be obtained, would 'destroy the whole business' of religious belief. (23) This remark was prefaced by the further claim that to classify religious beliefs as 'hypotheses', which, in the nature of the case, 'may or may not be true', is to misidentify the character of religious beliefs. Now I take it that the force of the argument here is, this classify religious beliefs as hypotheses and you will construe such beliefs as beliefs for which evidence can or ought to be sought, beliefs for which evidence is relevant. Now this is certainly true, but are beliefs thought of as hypotheses the only kind of beliefs for which evidence can or ought to be sought? Can there not be beliefs about the facts for which evidence can be sought, but such beliefs would be misdescribed if they were thought of as hypotheses? Surely the belief I have, that I am now holding a pen writing, is a belief about what is the case, a belief for which there can be evidence? But

such a belief, which I hold, is surely not in any sense of the term an hypothesis? Further, if Phillips does have in mind the claim that all beliefs for which there can be evidence are hypotheses, then, such a claim would surely depend, as V. Pratt has pointed out, on the

> "extraordinary doctrine that all contingent truths - truth 'dependent on what happens to be the case' - are hypotheses only to be believed tentatively by the sensible person. And this would obviously be untenable." (24)

However, leaving aside the question of evidence and the 'facts' which constitute such evidence for the moment, let us turn to note a remark of Pratt's, 'Hypotheses are only to be believed tentatively by the sensible person'. What constitutes a belief as an hypothesis is not only that a proposition is put forward which can or must be tested in accordance with the facts or the evidence /the 'objective' aspect of an hypothesis/ but also the tentative and conjectural nature in which it is held or ought to be held by the person who holds the belief /the 'subjective' aspect of an hypothesis/. Now behind the desire to claim that religious beliefs are not hypotheses for which there can be evidence or lack of evidence, there is, if you like, for Phillips, a 'deeper' concern. Hypotheses are believed conjecturally, treated tentatively because the 'object' of the belief may or may not be true, but, for Phillips, religious beliefs are not like this - they are absolutes for the believer. (25) Religious beliefs and responses are not held tentatively, they are firm and unshakeable for the believer and this is so because

> "the force of the responses cannot be justified in any external way; it can merely be shown. This is true of religious responses, the religious beliefs which have an absolute character or value." (26)

But what does it mean for a religious belief or response to have an 'absolute character or value'? Phillips states:

> "Beliefs are not testable hypotheses, but absolutes for believers insofar as they predominate in and determine much of their thinking. The absolute beliefs are the criteria not the object of assessment." (27)

And they are the criteria of assessment insofar as, and here Phillips explicitly follows Wittgenstein, they "regulate my thinking. It is firm in that it is to this picture that I appeal in such situations as these." (28)

First of all, is it enough to distinguish religious beliefs from hypotheses to say that religious beliefs regulate one's life? Surely Mitchell is correct when he claims that the fact

> "that religious beliefs have this regulative function does not, then, in itself rule out their being hypotheses, requiring like other hypotheses the support of evidence. A man may reasonably regulate his life according to a hypothesis which he recognises to be open to dispute. He may, indeed, stake everything on it, in which case the belief would have for him the absolute character upon which Phillips insists, while still remaining, from a purely epistemological point of view, a hypothesis." (29)

Further, surely the kind of phenomenon which Phillips is obliquely referring to in this context is the notion or idea

of commitment - a commitment which in a Christian context can be (a) commitment to a 'Person' or (b) commitment to believe despite the facts? One believes, one's belief is an absolute, because of one's trust in a 'Person', God; or, in holding fast to one's belief one demonstrates the strength of one's belief, one refuses to question one's belief despite possibly contrary evidence-rather one holds to one's belief despite the facts. To lose one's belief in this context because of the facts would be a sign of weakness. Kierkegaard comes to mind here: "If I wish to preserve myself in faith I must constantly be intent upon holding fast the objective uncertainty." (30) However, it is doubtful if Phillips can have either of these two senses of commitment in mind. First of all, no use or mention is made of the personal nature of the focus or object of worship, and, secondly, it cannot be the case that the absolute nature of one's faith is displayed in holding fast to one's faith despite the facts, despite the 'objective uncertainty'. Rather, for a religious person the "beliefs assess the facts" (31) and they do this insofar as they are responses to the facts and cannot be assessed as correct or incorrect by the facts. Religious responses for Phillips are the 'criteria of assessment not the object of assessment'.

For Phillips rather, following Wittgenstein in referring to the entertaining of a religious belief or response as the entertaining of a 'picture',

> "believing in the picture means, for example, putting one's trust in it, sacrificing for it, letting it regulate one's life and so on. Not believing in the picture means that the picture plays no part in one's thinking." (32)

Further, these religious pictures /myths, visions (33)/ insofar as they are not "pictures '<u>of</u>' anything" (34) "were not established by means of evidence and ... cannot be overthrown by means of evidence either." (35) To lose a religious picture is not to lose it because of the evidence against, but rather, claims Phillips, to lose it because it has become 'senseless', "the belief is meaningless". (36)

It is interesting at this point of the discussion to note that, in the context of an account of loss of belief in religious pictures, Phillips feels compelled to say something about Braithwaite's use of the term 'picture'. Two points he believes, among others, serve to distinguish their use of the term; the first concerning the <u>importance</u> of the religious picture and the second concerning what is involved in saying the picture is true. He states:

> "When such moral or religious pictures do decline, there is often no substitute for them. This is why the role of such pictures is trivialised if one considers them to be mere stories which serve as psychological aides in adhering to moral truths whose intelligibility is independent of them. This is to speak as if the pictures were something people could use or dispose of at will, according to whether they served their purpose. It is also to speak as if one had a notion of truth apart from the pictures, by appeal to which they are measured. I have been stressing, however, that for the believer, it is the pictures that measure them. Wittgenstein stressed in his lectures that 'The whole <u>weight</u> may be in the picture'. The picture is not a picturesque way of saying something

> else. It says what it says; and when the picture dies, something dies with it, and there can be no substitute for that which dies with the picture." (37)

Braithwaite is wrong, and only in these ways, it should be added, if he believes that the religious 'picture' or 'vision' is contingently related to religious belief, and he further errs if he believes the 'truths' represented by the pictures can be understood independently of the picture.

Absolute faith, for Phillips, is then a way of meeting and assessing events in the world - it is not a product of the way things go. The 'truth' of religion cannot then depend on the way things go in an individual's life. Religious beliefs are not only not hypotheses, they are not any kind of factual belief either (38); religious beliefs are not empirical propositions. (39) They are not beliefs whose truth must "wait on a further external check" (40) or beliefs which would have a point "only if certain consequences follow". (41) Perhaps the best way to display what Phillips takes absolute faith to mean in a particular context is to contrast it with what I take to be the conception of faith represented in the central Christian tradition - an account of faith which maintains that what happens, how the world is, is of crucial relevance for the significance and truth of religious belief. Phillips contrasts his own account of absolute faith with such a 'traditional account' in the following terms. (Professor Hick's account of religious belief is taken as an example of a 'traditional account of faith'.)

> "There are some people the truth of whose religion depends on the way things go in their lives.

> Things may not go well here and now, but unless the ultimate facts, the eschatological situation, are favourable in some sense or other, faith has been a hoax and a failure. For Hick the kind of difference religion makes to life is the difference between a set of empirical facts being or not being the case. This belief is illustrated by a comment I heard a mother make about her mentally handicapped child: 'Only my religious faith keeps me going. Of one thing I am sure: my child's place in heaven is secure.' On Hick's account, the mother would be saying, 'It is terrible for my child at the moment, but he is to be compensated later on.' Her hope is in certain facts being realised.
>
> "Although I sympathise with the mother's hope, I do not find it impressive religiously. Indeed, I should want to go further and say that it has little to do with religion, being much closer to superstition. Two other mothers of mentally handicapped children expressed what their religious faith meant to them in very different terms. One of them discussed the view that there is a prima facie incompatibility between belief in God and the terribleness of having a mentally handicapped child. People kept asking her why such a thing should have happened to her, to which she replied, 'Why shouldn't it have happened to me?' I found this answer extremely impressive, although I suspect that it needs a certain kind of religious belief to find it so." (42)

For Phillips, any conception of religious belief which sees the 'truth' of the belief being determined by what consequences are the case, which facts are realised rather than certain others, is "a policy rather than a faith." (43) "Belief

in God," Phillips continues,

> "is represented as a means to a further end. The end is all important, the means relatively unimportant. Belief in God has a point only if certain consequences follow. This seems to falsify the absolute character which belief in God has for many believers." (44)

> "Hick's eschatological propaganda ... is a requisite for compensation, and as such seems foreign to deep religious faith." (45)

And yet, as I have said, Hick's view represents the central Christian tradition.

Phillips will have none of this. Religious beliefs are not explanatory, testable hypotheses, not any kind of factual belief, but ways of reacting to and meeting such situations as portrayed in the example. Religious faith is a way of responding to and indeed accepting good and evil in the world. "The believer's hope is not hope for anything. ... It is simply hope, hope in the sense of ability to live with himself." (46) Absolute religious belief or faith or response finds its ultimate expression in finding the world/life meaningful, no matter how things are or go in the world - the religious person, like the mystic in the Tractatus is content with the world, he accepts fully without any reservations the brute factuality of the world, he is in agreement with the world, he has no anticipations. The truth of religious faith finds its expression in the religious faith itself, its truth is not dependent on certain factual conditions being, or not being, the case.

And yet, to mention truth is to raise a problem. What could it possibly mean for religious responses or beliefs, as

Phillips has characterised them,to be true? What could the word 'true' mean here? We must turn to examine this next.

CHAPTER 4

RELIGIOUS TRUTH

> "If they ask, 'Is it true?' we should answer: 'It is so beautiful that it must certainly contain a lot of truth. As for knowing whether it is, or is not, absolutely true, try to become capable of deciding that for yourselves when you grow up.'" (1)

In the middle of a passage concerned with the possibility of discussion between religions Phillips introduces the following comments on the topic of religious truth.

> "One might object to the above analysis of disputes between religions on the grounds that it stresses religious meaning at the expense of religious truth. The analysis does not indicate which religion is the true one. But why should anyone suppose that philosophy can answer that question? An opponent of religion might claim that far from leaving the question of religious truth unanswered, I have guaranteed that any possible answer is favourable to religion by insisting that the criteria of intelligibility in religious matters are to be found within religion. This objection confuses my epistemological thesis with an absurd religious doctrine. To say that the criteria of truth and falsity in religion are to be found within religious traditions is to say nothing of the truth or falsity of the religion in question." (2)

Thus the criteria of truth and falsity are to be found within religious traditions, but to say that, to make that point, is to give no information as to which religious

tradition is true and which religious traditions are false.

Now M. Durrant, commenting on such a claim, pinpoints an alleged major difficulty in Phillips' thesis here. For Phillips the criteria of truth and falsity in religion are found within particular religious traditions, but, given that account, how could it even make sense to talk of the truth or falsity of a religious tradition or a religion as such? As Durrant states:

> "on his own thesis the notion of 'the true religion' is not one which can be sensibly introduced. Phillips only manages to get the idea of a true or false religion introduced by emphasising the mistake of his objector - of course it does not follow from the thesis that what constitutes religious truth in any one tradition is determined by criteria internal to that religion, that that religion is itself true, but neither does it follow from the invalidity of the move on the part of the objector that Phillips can introduce the notions of truth and falsity in connection with a religious tradition itself and in order for him to allow that religion or a religious tradition can be sensibly adjudged true or false he must allow that the norm of truth or falsity of a religion is to be found outside the context of that religion ... What Phillips should conclude from his criticism of the objector ... is that a religion itself cannot be either true or false." (3)

Now this seems like a sound objection, but before commenting on its validity let me explore a little further what Phillips means when he claims that we can talk of the truth or falsity of a particular religion or religious tradition. What does it mean to say that a religion is true? Why can a

philosopher not attempt to provide an answer to this question? If the question is an intelligible one why are philosophical considerations irrelevant? Why can a philosopher not attempt to discover who the 'true God' is,if any? Well,for Phillips, this is because of

> "the nature of truth in this context. To say, 'This is the true God,' is to believe in Him and worship Him. I can say, 'This theory is true, but I couldn't care less about it,' and there is nothing odd about what I say. On the other hand, if I say, 'This is the true God, but I couldn't care less,' it is difficult to know what this could mean. Belief in the true God is not like belief in a true theory. To believe in the former case is synonymous with worship ... In morality and religion truth is a personal matter." (4)

Thus,for Phillips,it would seem that to affirm a religion or a religious tradition as true is not to impose criteria from <u>outside</u> the religious tradition,or indeed from another religious tradition,and use these criteria to assess the truth or falsity of the particular religious tradition in question. It is not to impose <u>different</u> or <u>other</u> criteria of truth and ask from the standpoint of these criteria whether a particular religious tradition is true. Rather,to affirm a religion as true is to claim that the truths of a <u>particular</u> religious tradition <u>constitute</u> 'truths' for the person making the claim. To say,'This is the <u>true</u> religion',is not to assess the truth or falsity of that particular religion from outside the religion, by imposing criteria of truth other than those presented within the religion, rather it is to <u>affirm</u> and accept the religious truths of that particular religion, accept <u>them</u> <u>for</u>

oneself as constituting religious truths - 'in religion truth is a personal matter'.

Now with this account in mind of what it means to affirm a particular religion as true, let me return to Durrant's criticism. Durrant's mistake, as I see it, is that he believes, when Phillips talks of the truth or falsity of a religion - criteria of truth and falsity in religion having already been declared to be found within particular religious traditions - that Phillips is talking about or discussing alternative criteria of truth which can be found outside particular religious traditions and which can be used to assess the truth or falsity of particular religions. And of course, if this were so, Phillips would be guilty of the inconsistency pinpointed by Durrant. However Phillips, when he talks of the truth of a religion, is not suggesting either (a) that such criteria can be found or (b) if found, imposed, but rather pointing out that what it means to talk of a religion as true is simply to claim that the truths of a particular religion constitute truths for me - constitute truths which I can live by and which can sustain me. Certainly there are different understandings, senses of the word 'truth' involved here. To ask a question about the truth of a particular issue or doctrine within a religion, appeal must be made to the criteria of truth and falsity within that religion; but to ask whether the religion itself is true, whether the truths of that religion constitute the truth, is to ask whether anyone is sustained by those truths, can accept them as his or her own, can live by them. What is slightly surprising in Durrant's case is that he fails to see this point here. For earlier in

his article, when discussing and arguing against the Winchian claim that 'criteria of intelligibility arise out of and are only intelligible within ways of living', and thus apparently cannot be applied to ways of living as such, he makes the following comment:

> "But no one who maintains that modes of social life can be judged intelligible or unintelligible wishes to maintain that ... the sense of intelligibility is the same in both types of cases. We may both allow that each mode of social life has its own internal criteria of intelligibility ... and allow that modes of social life may themselves be ajudged intelligible or unintelligible ..." (5)

And by parity of reasoning the same point should apply or be applied to Phillips' account of religious truth.

P. Sherry is another philosopher who finds difficulties with Phillips' account. Unlike Durrant it is not the intelligibility, the very sense of applying criteria of truth and falsity to religion, when such criteria have been defined as being discovered internally in each religious tradition, which troubles him, rather it is the problem of whether or not Phillips' account is a rational one. As he states, commenting on Phillips' original passage:

> "At first sight all this reads like a gross confusion, amounting to little more than the observation that different religions claim different 'truths' and the logical comment that they cannot all be really true. One is tempted to retort that no one is asking Phillips to arbitrate between different religions. The whole point at issue is that if the truth claims of different religions conflict and there seems

> to be no way in principle of resolving such disagreements, ... then the whole status of religious 'truth' or 'knowledge' is called into question. Phillips seems to be admitting the difficulty and yet saying limply 'Well, it's none of my business', apparently failing to realise that it drives a coach and horses right through his whole argument." (6)

For Sherry the difficulty is that, if religious truth is to be discovered within particular religious traditions, one is acting irrationally if one then proceeds to claim that, although this is so, of course not all these 'truths' are <u>really</u> true. But this is to assume that what Phillips understands by the word 'truth', the sense of the word 'truth', is the same when the different questions of truth arise. Phillips is not saying, at one and the same time, 'x is true' and 'possibly <u>not</u> x'; rather, if we bear in mind what it means for Phillips to affirm a religion or religious tradition as true, as opposed to what it means to discover what are the particular truths of particular religious traditions, we shall see that he is not guilty of the 'gross confusion' as suggested by Sherry. In asking whether a religion is true or false Phillips is not denying the truths of any particular religious tradition but asking whether the truths of a particular tradition are true for anyone.

I think at this stage it would be useful to do two things. First of all, elucidate more fully what Phillips means when he claims that criteria of truth and falsity in religion are discovered within a religious tradition, and secondly, examine more closely what it means to affirm a religion as true or particular religious beliefs as true; how the word

'truth' is used in this context. First of all however, how are criteria of truth and falsity applied within religious belief or a religious tradition?

Well, in one obvious sense, it is true within, for example, the Christian religious tradition, that God is considered to be a Trinity of three 'persons', false that he is considered to be a single non-triune God. It is true that Jesus is considered to be the son of God, false that he is considered as merely a very good man. As Phillips states:

> "There are various criteria recognised by religious believers for what can and what cannot be said to God and about God. It is not true that there are no tests for what is truly religious. Neither is it true that there are no tests for what is to count as religious as opposed to hallucinatory beliefs. Doctors do not look on church-going or worship as symptoms of religious mania. Furthermore, if a person says he has had a vision, it does not follow that he has had one. If a man said that God had told him in a vision to eliminate all coloured people from the face of the earth, this would not be accepted by the Christian community as a vision from God ... there are criteria within religious traditions which distinguish between what can and cannot be said, what is true and what is false, what is deep and what is shallow." (7)

And, of course, with reference to Phillips' work and with particular reference to the role the 'notion of community' plays in his argument, I do not think it can be disputed that Phillips can allow for such talk of truth and falsity <u>within</u> a religion or religious tradition. However, as Phillips himself recognises, what has excited the interest of philosophers has not

been disputed questions within a particular religious tradition, i.e. whether God should be thought of as three persons or simply one person, whether one kind or type of prayer is more truly religious than another kind or type of prayer, but whether it is the case, is true, there is a God who may or may not be one or three persons.

Before commenting on Phillips' subsequent argument here I think it should be noted that R. Trigg is doing Phillips an injustice when he claims that Phillips is deflecting the question of the truth and falsity of religious claims as such into questions concerned with what is and what is not truly religious. For Trigg,

> "there is a slide from the truth and falsity of religious claims to what is 'truly religious'. Phillips seems to think that in talking about the latter, he is somehow answering the former. Given his refusal to accept the possibility of any external justification of religion, he can only allow for talk of truth within religion, and his emphasis on the criteria accepted by religious believers follows from this. There is then room for talk of true and false religion, but none for talk of religion as such being true or false. It is no use pretending that any point about the truth or falsity of religious claims can be fully met by merely distinguishing between what is and what is not truly religious." (8)

Now, to repeat the point, Phillips is aware that one cannot deflect questions of the truth and falsity of religious beliefs as such, into questions concerned with what is or what is not truly religious. (9) Rather, what he is concerned to

deny is, to take a phrase from Trigg, the possibility of giving an 'external justification of religion as such'. As he states, it "makes no sense to ask whether religion as such is true or false, if what one has in mind is an external non-religious or non-moral proof of the truth of religion." (10) But what is meant here by an 'external non-moral, non-religious proof of the truth of religion'? Well, I presume that Phillips has in mind here a conception of religious truth - such as he finds exemplified in the work of Professor Hick - where truth is assessed in terms of its agreement with or deviation from certain facts, certain factual situations. In religion however, what is called a religious truth "has little to do with verifying whether a future state of affairs ... is to take place." (11) Indeed to ask whether religious beliefs are true "as if they were ... would-be empirical propositions is to ask the wrong kind of question." (12) "'Truth' as used in connection with empirical statements is different from the notion of truth often used in religion." (13)

Given, however, that Phillips has displayed how the word 'truth' is <u>not</u> used in religious contexts, what does he have to say about its actual use; and here we come to our second task. He states:

> "I suggest that /the word 'truth' in religion/ is used in a way akin to that in which it is used when we say, 'There's a lot of truth in that', or the way it was used when Jesus said, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.'" (14)

Note that prefacing Phillips' comments here is the claim that he is expounding how the word 'truth' is or would be used if we were discussing what could be meant by claiming that there

is a 'domain of religious knowledge and truth'. Thus to say that there is a domain of religious knowledge and truth is, in terms of the examples given, to express one's commitment to it. To see that there is such a domain of truth is to see it as true. Again, a further example:

> "If a person says, 'I have come to see the truth of the saying, that it is better to give than to receive' ... if someone has come to see the truth of it, that doesn't mean that he has assessed generosity by means of some measure other than generosity. What he has come to see is the beauty of generosity. When he says there is a lot of truth in it, what this comes to in practical terms is that he strives after it and tries to regulate his life accordingly." (15)

Note, first of all, the use of a moral example to elucidate the nature and status of a religious 'truth', which should not of course be entirely unexpected. Secondly, note that to say there is a lot of truth in it is to 'strive after and regulate' one's life in accord with the belief.

This commissive force of religious truth is best brought out when Phillips discusses what it could mean to affirm religious pictures as true. As Phillips states:

> "It is of the utmost philosophical importance to recognise that for believers these pictures constitute truths, truths which form the essence of life's meaning for them. To ask someone whether he thinks these beliefs are true ... is to ask him whether he can live by them, whether he can digest them, whether they constitute food for him. ... If a man asks, 'I wonder whether it's all true?' that question, if not confused, is not a request for a proof, but an expression of

his doubt regarding whether there is anything in all this." (16)

In this manner Phillips displays how the word 'truth' is used when what is in question is the use of the word 'true' in religion, and it indeed reinforces and explicates his earlier remark that in 'religion truth is a personal matter'. Now there are obviously several objections to such an analysis. The two objections with the most force are, first of all, that Phillips has failed to adequately describe what it means for religious believers to affirm their beliefs as true. That is, for most religious believers, whether in the Christian tradition or not, their beliefs are regarded as true, are regarded as verifiable, as fact-claiming, as true or false in this sense and more importantly so than any 'ordinary' factual belief. Secondly, Phillips' analysis does seem to be incapable of dealing with the fact, as Sherry points out,

> "that different religions often have mutually incompatible beliefs. Now if two people are nourished by beliefs which contradict each other then one of them is nourished by a false belief." (17)

Phillips does feel the force of these objections and tries to answer them in the following way. Regarding the first objection, which Phillips reads as an objection that he is denying the literal truth of religious beliefs or pictures, he states:

> "But what is literal truth in this context? When we say that something is not literally true, we can compare it with the context where it could be literally true. But we are agreed that this is what cannot be done in the cases I am

> considering ... we have no original context of literal truth which the religious pictures can distort or deviate from. Once we realise this we are more likely to consider the use of the pictures themselves. If we want to speak of 'literal truth' here, might we not say that the literal truth is ... the role they played in changing a whole way of life." (18)

The pictures can only intelligibly be described as not literally true if it is intelligible to imagine a situation where they could be conceived to be literally true. As, for Phillips, this is not possible, on the one hand it therefore makes no sense either to describe them as literally or not literally true, but on the other hand they can be thought of as literally true if by that is meant they can play a role in a person's life. One can sympathise with W. D. Hudson's comment here:

> "It is hard to dispel the feeling that there is some sleight of hand in his argument here: literally they can't be true, so figuratively they can't be true, so literally they must be true." (19)

One can hardly feel Phillips is serious in his argument here.

With regard to the second objection, and the possibility of mutually incompatible beliefs being held by different religions, Phillips is inclined to maintain two mutually incompatible points. On the one hand he wants to say there is no "objective religious norm" such that we, for example, could classify "Christianity as being a better religion" (20); we cannot adjudicate between religions. On the other hand he wants to claim, quoting approvingly from S. Weil, that "the various authentic religious traditions are different reflections of the same truth", (21) which would seem to imply the

existence of an 'objective religious norm' by which we could identify the different religious traditions as being different reflections of the same truth. Once again the argument seems unsuccessful.

That the arguments are unsuccessful, however, is really nothing to be surprised at, given the nature and analysis of religious truth Phillips presents us with. For Phillips, religious truth is subjective truth, religious beliefs are true insofar as they 'provide nourishment', 'can be digested', 'constitute food' for the believer. Now Phillips is correct to point to the 'salvation aspect' of religious truth, but where he errs is in claiming that the 'salvation aspect' constitutes what it means to affirm a religious belief as true. Rather, with regard to most religious beliefs, it is because what they proclaim is believed to be true - factually true - that they are adopted by their adherents as true beliefs and can thus provide a 'salvation' for those holding them. A. K. Nielsen states: "... religions such as Christianity and Judaism do commit their adherents to the acceptance of certain metaphysical claims." (22) Now if this is the case, can we rest content with Phillips' claim that philosophy cannot indicate which religion is the true religion? Surely philosophy must have some role here? I want now, therefore, to turn to examine in more detail the role Phillips allots to philosophy as providing a conceptual analysis of religious belief and belief-claims.

CHAPTER 5

PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERSTANDING AND RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING

For Phillips it is crucial that philosophers never "ignore religious criteria of meaningfulness", because once this does occur "epistemological scepticism about religion is inevitable." (1) Given that criteria of meaningfulness are internal to 'religious language-games' it follows that the role of philosophy "in this context is not to justify but to understand." (2) That is, there can be "no question of a general justification of religious belief, of giving religion a 'sound foundation'," indeed the very idea of religion "standing in need of justification is confused. ... Philosophy is neither for nor against religion." (3) Rather, the role of the philosopher is to seek to "clarify the meaning of religious statements", but if he wishes to give an account of religious beliefs "he must begin with the contexts in which these concepts have their life." (4) One must distinguish 'philosophical understanding from religious understanding'. (5) Philosophy must explore the 'depth grammar' of religious belief, not the 'surface grammar' and the account it gives can only be judged adequate according to whether "the given account does justice to the complex network of behaviour which the 'religious belief' may refer to." (6) Philosophy is thus descriptive, "it is neither for nor against religion ... This fact distinguishes philosophy from apologetics." (7)

Now what I want to examine in this chapter is, first of all, what notion or idea of meaningfulness Phillips has in mind

when he claims that the "criteria of the meaningfulness of religious concepts are to be found within religion itself." (8) Secondly, examine whether one can validly make a sharp distinction, as Phillips does, between philosophical and religious understanding and further claim that the role of philosophy in this context is not to justify religious belief but rather to describe it, understand it, give a conceptual account of it. Thirdly, I want to examine whether philosophy, in either a descriptive or other role, understood as providing a conceptual analysis of the depth grammar of religious belief and concepts in Phillips' sense, does not itself presuppose an independent religious position, an understanding of the nature of 'true religion'.

First of all, what notion or idea of meaning is Phillips referring to when he claims that philosophers only at their peril ignore 'religious criteria of meaningfulness'. Phillips first introduces the topic in this way. He states:

> "It is common among philosophers today to speak of the liberation of epistemology from the narrow criteria of logical positivism. 'The meaning of a word is to be found in the way it is used' has become a well-known slogan. Yet, religion has benefitted little from the so-called concessions. Philosophers stress that by 'use' they do not mean any kind of use. ... Many of the things religious believers say, according to some philosophers, must be rejected as a misuse of language. Apparently the mistake is due to the fact that the way in which religious people use certain concepts breaks the rules which govern their use. These rules are determined by the way in which we ordinarily use words." (9)

What seems to be in question here is,(a) what is involved in a word having meaning,and (b) particular difficulties pertaining to religious concepts and terms such that the functioning of these terms in the language seems to represent a 'misuse of language'. Thus,as Phillips continues:

> "In the judgement on the meaning of religion, there is said to be a strain between it and ordinary meaning. The strain need not be obvious at first, and the rules need not be broken in a dramatic way. This, we are told, is why religious people fail to see their mistake; their lapse into nonsense is gradual." (10)

To exemplify his point here Phillips refers us to the arguments of Professors Flew and Hepburn (11).

Now the point,I think,that Professors Flew and Hepburn were trying to make in raising these doubts about the very intelligibility of religious language is the following. They were not concerned to claim that religious language is totally unintelligible - totally nonsense. Rather,religious concepts and terms do have a use in language and there are recognised rules governing the use of these terms in the language. However,what is questioned is whether or not religious language can claim, as it apparently does claim, to be fact stating. That is, what is at issue is not grammatical intelligibility but factual intelligibility. Are religious statements factually intelligible? Do statements such as,'God loves all men', 'God created the world', make genuine truth-claims?

Now Phillips feels that Professors Flew and Hepburn's arguments can be met and can be answered by drawing attention to the grammar of religious language, and in particular to its

depth grammar. He states:

> "Flew and Hepburn have paid too much attention to the surface grammar of religious statements. They have assumed too readily that words such as 'existence', 'love', 'will', are used in the same way of God as they are used of human beings, animate and inanimate objects. Depth grammar is made explicit by asking what can and what cannot be said of the concept in question. To understand the limits of what can be said about a concept, one must take account of the context in which the concept is used." (12)

That is, by paying attention to what words mean, how they are used, how the sentences of which they form a part are used in religious contexts, Phillips seems to be claiming, we shall be enlightened as to the intelligibility, the meaningfulness in this sense, of religious concepts and terms. Thus 'religious criteria of meaningfulness' seems to refer to what is involved in a religious term having meaning, religious sentences having a sense-in other words to 'word and sentence' meaning. And to understand what can be said or not said about a religious concept reference must be made to the religious context in which the concept has a use. 'The criteria of the meaningfulness of religious concepts are to be found within religion itself.'

Now of course, in one sense, Professors Flew and Hepburn may be displeased with this reply because what they particularly wanted to claim was that in an important sense religious assertions did not meet a particular philosophical criterion of meaning - a fundamentally empiricist criterion of factual intelligibility. They would not want to deny that religious concepts and terms must originally be viewed within the context

of religious belief and religious assertions, but what is in question is whether religious sentences when used as statements actually do make factual assertions, do make genuine truth claims? However, I think Phillips would feel here that he has met their point, because, he might argue, in tracing out what the particular depth grammar is of religious statements one would see the inappropriateness of applying criteria of factual intelligibility to religious statements. They are not that kind of statement, they are not meant to be factually informative.

However, to continue, not only are the 'criteria of the meaningfulness of religious concepts to be found within religion', but perhaps before one can understand what religious concepts and terms mean one must actually be a religious believer. Not only are the criteria internal but one cannot understand what religious concepts and terms mean unless one believes in God. And indeed, as we have seen, Phillips does appear to claim that 'one cannot understand what praising, confessing, thanking, or asking mean in worship apart from belief in an eternal God'. Not only are the criteria of meaningfulness of religious concepts internal but they can only be known internally too, from the standpoint of a participant. One must believe in order to understand.

Now we have examined the problems involved here before (Chapter 2, section iv) and found Phillips' reply to the difficulties which attend any such position, surprising. That is, if one must believe before one can understand religious concepts and terms how can an account be given of a rejection of religious belief? Now Phillips seemed to believe that an

intelligible account could be given of a rejection of religious belief here, but what his reply seemed to amount to was that someone could reject religious belief insofar as they were claiming they could see no point, no significance, no purpose in applying religious terms and concepts; religious concepts and terms were meaningless to them in this sense. Now this reply was surprising in that it seemed inadequate to the difficulties Phillips was facing. To reject concepts and terms as meaningless, in the sense of failing to see their point, significance or function is of course possible, but it is only possible if the concepts and terms, the words, are understood to have a meaning, have a sense in the first place. And it was this latter point which was in question with regard to the example we were concerned with. If one must believe in order to understand the meaning of the terms, how could one possibly reject the belief and still retain an understanding of the terms to enable one to do so? Further, we also saw that Phillips' reference, in this context, to his distinction between philosophical and religious understanding was of no help in solving the problem.

Now it seems to me that one way to resolve this problem, and to make a point which would be logically illuminating in its own right, would be to claim that Phillips, when he refers to the 'criteria of the meaningfulness of religious concepts' being found within religion itself, is not making a point with reference to what is involved in religious terms and words and sentences having meaning, but is rather claiming that to see the religious point, purpose, significance and function of religious concepts - their meaningfulness in this sense -

reference must be made to the practice and institution of religion. To understand what prayer means, for example, is to see the meaningfulness of the activity of praying - the understanding in this connection not being concerned with the meaning of the words, terms and the sentences in which they appear, that go to make up prayers. Let me substantiate my claim here.

First of all, in further discussion of the points made by Professors Flew and Hepburn, Phillips states the following:

> "But might not the reverse be true, that the lover of obscurantism is not the religious believer, but the philosopher who does not ask himself what religious people are saying, but who talks in terms of what they must be saying, if they are to be understood as saying anything at all? I am not denying for one moment the conceptual distinctions which Flew, Hepburn ... have made. It is essential and important to make them. But once having shown, as Hume showed conclusively on so many issues, what religious activities do not mean, the next step, surely, is to ask what they do mean, not to doubt whether they can mean anything at all." (13)

Surely such talk as to what religious activities do or do not mean is talk of the religious point or significance - the meaning in this sense - of religious activities? Further, while it is obviously true that this was not the issue which troubled Professors Flew and Hepburn it is obvious that Phillips is interpreting the problem in this way. Also, Phillips claims that "religion is not some kind of technical discourse" (14); indeed, insofar as "religious language must be learnt, religion is public." (15) Again with reference to

religious terms, Phillips states: "and yet we know what we mean by 'God', the word is used frequently enough and meaningfully enough amongst us," (16) and further:

> "to be able to come to see meaning in religious concepts in the sense of being able to use them, is to come to see what e.g. divine anger means, is to come to view one's life in relation to the will of God, and to recognise the horror of estrangement from it." (17)

To come to see the meaning of a religious concept in the sense of being able to use it, is a function of coming to see the religious point or purpose of using or applying religious concepts, their meaningfulness in this sense. This is surely the natural interpretation of this last passage. Or again, when discussing philosophical understanding of religious belief: "To say what is meant by belief in God, one must take account of what God means to religious believers; one must have some feeling for the game." (18) Not what the term 'God' means, rather, one must take account of the significance or point of worshipping God, the religious significance or point of religious beliefs to religious believers. Further: "Let me try to sum the matter up in this way: to try to see the meaning of religious beliefs is not to advocate what meaning they should have in people's lives." (19)

I think enough has been said to substantiate the point I am making, but Phillips does provide us with one further excellent example which by reason of its extreme importance is worth giving some extensive attention to, especially as it involves an account of a rejection of religious belief – a problem which, as we have seen, on the interpretation that by

criteria of meaning being internal to religion is meant word or sentence meaning, appears to pose difficulties for Phillips.

The rejection of religious belief is taken from a story by Tolstoy and concerns a young man praying in front of his brother. His brother passes a quite innocuous comment on the praying of the young man who, although he does not argue with his brother or come to accept his brother's convictions, comes to see the senselessness of his praying. Phillips comments on this passage in the following way:

> "Tolstoy provides an excellent example here of <u>one</u> way in which religious pictures and practices can lose their hold on a man's life. There is no talk of weighing evidence, etc., but nevertheless there is talk of senselessness. What made the practice senseless for the young man was precisely what they had become in his life, 'a habit retained from childhood'. That is all the practice of praying had become, a routine he went through before turning in at night. ... He simply discovered in the way Tolstoy describes, that the beliefs meant nothing to him. ... The character of the religious practices had never developed and the routine was carried out in a context of indifference. The practice was not nourished by other aspects of the young man's life but was independent of them." (20)

The practice of praying was seen to be senseless because it was seen to be simply a habit retained from childhood. The beliefs involved in the praying meant nothing to the young man because the prayer was divorced from a context of religious practice. Praying had become senseless, not because the word

'prayer' had ceased to have a meaning, but because the young man could not see the religious point or purpose or indeed the significance, the meaningfulness in this sense, of praying.

Phillips continues:

> "The point of interest for us, however, is to consider what might happen when someone gives an account of religious beliefs in such circumstances. ... In one sense, the person remains familiar with his religious belief, but in another sense, the belief is meaningless for him." (21)

The person is familiar with the religious belief insofar as he can, for example, give an account of what the word 'prayer' means, even what is involved in praying, But he can no longer see the religious significance or point of praying; the belief is meaningless for him in this sense. At this juncture Phillips refers us to the writings of Kemp-Smith because he believes Kemp-Smith provides an excellent analysis of what often occurs in such situations.

For K. Smith, although people

> "may have thrown over the religious beliefs of the communities in which they have been nurtured, they still continue to be influenced by the phraseology of religious devotions - a phraseology which, in its endeavour to be concrete and universally intelligible, is at little pains to guard against the misunderstandings to which it may so easily give rise. As they insist upon, and even exaggerate, the merely literal meaning of this phraseology, the God in whom they have ceased to believe is a Being whom they picture in an utterly anthropomorphic fashion - a kind of Being who even if he were able to say to

himself, 'All things are due to me' would still of necessity be pursued by the question, 'But whence then am I?'" (22)

Thus Professors Flew and Hepburn's /I presume Phillips would believe the K. emp Smith point applies to them as he is continually accusing them of conceiving of God in an anthropomorphic fashion/ difficulties with the <u>factual intelligibility</u> of God talk arises <u>not</u> from their inability to see what the word 'God' really means -the meaning of religious concepts and terms are perfectly clear and open to them in this sense - but rather from their inability to see the point or significance of participating in religious beliefs and activities. The belief is no longer meaningful in this sense and because this is so they ask questions with regard to the application of the term 'God' which, if they only could see the point or purpose of religious belief in God, they would see to be religiously inappropriate. They see the 'surface' as opposed to the 'depth' grammar.

As Phillips states:

> "the picture remains but divorced from its former use. Since the meaning of the picture is bound-up with its use, any analysis of the picture in which its use is ignored and in which it is seen as a would-be empirical proposition, is bound to conclude that the picture is senseless." (23)

The 'picture' remains, and even if one has rejected it one still can remain 'familiar' with it, one can still know the meaning of the terms and sentences used to 'express it'; but in another sense, as the picture is not used, one cannot see the point or purpose or significance of applying the

picture. The picture is senseless. That is, as the point or purpose or significance of the picture is involved in its use, this constitutes what makes the picture meaningful. If the picture is not used, this is because no one can see any point or purpose in using it - the picture becomes senseless in this sense. Given <u>this</u> account of what is involved in a rejection of a religious belief, I think if we apply this analysis to Phillips' earlier account of what is involved in a rejection of religious belief, we can perhaps now see <u>why</u> Phillips gave the particular analysis of rejection which he did. <u>Our</u> mistake was to think that by 'religious criteria of meaningfulness', or 'the criteria of the meaningfulness of religious concepts', Phillips is referring to religious language as some kind of 'technical discourse' or 'esoteric talk'; that he is concerned with the meaning of e.g. the word 'God' or the meaning of the sentences that contain the subject expression 'God'. Rather, when Phillips talks of the 'criteria of the meaningfulness of religious concepts being found within religion', what he has in mind is some such claim as that it is only from the standpoint of a religious commitment that one will be able to see, for example, what it <u>means</u> to believe in God; see the religious point, significance or purpose of such a belief, see why, in <u>this</u> <u>sense</u>, such a belief is <u>meaningful</u>. This, I think, is the sole substance of Phillips' claim here.

For Phillips, as we have seen, one must distinguish between a <u>philosophical</u> understanding of religious belief and concepts and a <u>religious</u> understanding of religious beliefs

and concepts. To believe in God does not entail that one should be able to give a philosophical understanding - a conceptual understanding or account-of one's belief, or indeed, if one can give a conceptual understanding, that it be, in Phillips' sense of the term, a 'good' conceptual account. In this latter case two possibilities are open. One can either say

> "that their philosophy reflects their belief, in which case they believe in superstition but not in God, or, taking the more charitable view, that they are failing to give a good philosophical account of what they really believe." (24)

The criterion for assessing whether an account is a 'good' one or not is whether or not the account is consistent with the roles of religious beliefs in people's lives. (25) Further, to give a philosophical account of religious belief one need not be a religious believer, though this is only true in a slightly qualified sense. As Phillips states:

> "One can see what kind of account religious beliefs call for without understanding a great deal about the religious significance of these beliefs ... One can know the moves in chess without having a love of the game, and to some extent this is possible in philosophy of religion: one can go far in saying what God cannot be if any sense is to be made of religion at all, but to say what is meant by belief in God, one must take account of what God means to religious believers; one must have some feeling for the game." (26)

One suspects here that more than 'some feeling for the game' would be necessary to give an account of what is meant by belief in God, because to see what is meant, i.e. understand

the religious significance and point of believing in God, is to believe in God. This point is made by Phillips himself at one stage when he states: "There is no understanding of religion without passion. And when the philosopher understands that, his understanding of religion is incompatible with scepticism" (27), though I suspect the position Phillips would prefer to hold here is well expressed in the following manner. "To make philosophical observations about the relation of truth and subjectivity in the realm of faith is very different from actually attaining this subjectivity or embracing this truth." (28) And this is so because the mark of a philosophical understanding is that it is an intellectual understanding whereas a religious understanding is displayed in a believer's life. (29)

The role of philosophy then is essentially descriptive; the role of the philosopher is to give a conceptual account of, for example, what it means to believe in God, Immortality etc. Philosophy cannot prescribe, advocate, criticise or indeed justify religious belief. Philosophy, we are told, leaves 'everything as it is'. Can one, however, rest content with such an account of the nature and role of philosophical and religious understanding? Is it possible to draw a sharp distinction between what is said in religion as opposed to what is said in philosophy about religion? Is the position of 'Phillips' philosopher', who fails to give a 'good' philosophical account of his religious belief, but who yet may have, despite this, a proper religious understanding of his belief, a tenable one? Can in fact a firm boundary be drawn between what is said in religion as opposed to what is said about religion? Is not

religion and the religious understanding impregnated with philosophical terms and concepts? It would seem impossible to deny this, especially when one thinks of a religion such as the Christian tradition. Is the religious understanding logically independent from the philosophical understanding of these same beliefs? (30)

Curiously and interestingly enough, as has been already pointed out (31), Phillips himself comes to doubt the validity of the account he has given which draws a sharp distinction between religious and philosophical understanding. As he states:

> "It seems that whatever philosophical views we hold about perception or the nature of physical objects, the way people see things, handle things, etc., goes on regardless. But is it like this where moral or religious beliefs are concerned? Can one say that, whatever answers are given in philosophy, the role which moral and religious beliefs play in people's lives goes on regardless? I do not think we can." (32)

Philosophy, which we are told may have already impregnated religious belief, can have an influence in different ways - there can, for example, be the influence of 'bad' philosophy. If 'bad' philosophy influences a person's beliefs this

> "may lead to an obscuring of a religious understanding which might have been possible otherwise. Think, for example, of the philosophical equation of immortality, and survival, eternity and duration, both of which I regard as philosophically bad. To believe that the only meaning that the immortality of the soul can have is that of survival after death. ... If as a philosopher, one believes ... that it makes no sense to

> speak of surviving death. Because philosophy has shown the belief to be meaningless, one is forced to give it up." (33)

But 'bad' philosophy is not the only kind of philosophy. Before acquiring a philosophical training a person may believe that talk of immortality means talk of survival of death, but philosophy will soon put the person right. But then,

> "one may come to see the possibility of speaking and thinking of the immortality of the soul in another way. Now, here, when one speaks of 'coming to understand', 'coming to see it as a possibility', 'coming to see the point of it', /note the equation of 'coming to understand' with 'coming to see the point of it'/ is it easy to draw a sharp distinction between a philosophical account of belief and believing, between giving an account of the immortality of the soul and believing in the immortality of the soul?" (34)

Here no <u>definite</u> or <u>general</u> answer can be given but, for Phillips,

> "it may be that in an individual's experience, coming to see the point of religious beliefs is at the same time the increase or dawning of philosophical and religious understanding. What I mean is that philosophical and religious understanding go together here. The deepening of philosophical understanding may at the same time be the deepening of religious understanding." (35)

Indeed in such cases, for Phillips, it would be "artificial to separate a person's philosophical reflections from his life." (36) Thus, in this sense, philosophical and religious understanding can go together. But note, however, that this can only happen when the philosophy is 'good' philosophy; 'bad'

philosophy does not have this role. As K. Nielsen notes:

> "in lieu of a very extensive justification, it is the grossest form of biased advocacy to assert that 'good philosophy' justifies belief by deepening our understanding of how it must be a true account of the ultimate nature of things while 'bad philosophy' criticises religious belief." (37)

One may, however, want to hesitate before stating that the phenomenon Phillips is referring to here is best described as philosophy justifying religious belief. Still, the logical independence of the religious understanding from the philosophical understanding has been denied and, to that extent, it is difficult to see how Phillips could rule out either a justificatory or a critical role for philosophy in relation to religious belief and understanding. Philosophy is not merely purely descriptive.

However I think there is a deeper point to note here. Note that the equation 'bad' philosophy makes between immortality and survival would not only be rejected by Phillips because it is a product of 'bad' philosophy; rather it would also be rejected on religious grounds too. Even if philosophy were to demonstrate there was a sense in which one could equate immortality and survival, Phillips would still want to reject the equation on religious grounds. As Phillips himself states when discussing prayer: "True, I must have an idea of what genuine prayer is before I can give a philosophical account of it." (38) But he also claims his choice cannot be entirely arbitrary or egocentric. "My idea of what prayer is must be justified by showing how it takes account of the complex

behaviour of religious believers in various situations." (39) That is, appeal must be made to the 'depth grammar' of the religious activity of praying. But what constitutes the depth grammar of the religious activity of praying in this context? Surely it is only by reference to Phillips' own idea of what constitutes 'genuine prayer', that such depth grammar can be discovered and identified? Indeed, I think, we must concur with P. Helm's reflections here:

> "... Phillips is working with a substantive view of religion which provides the rules of the 'grammar' of religion. This must be borne in mind when he appeals to what the believer says; it is less to what the believer says than to what he says after this has been tidied up by appeal to the depth grammar of religion." (40)

Now, given the acceptance of this point, what can be said of the alleged descriptive nature of philosophical understanding? 'Philosophy is neither for nor against religion' - this distinguishes 'philosophy from apologetics'. It seems to be the case that philosophy, understood in Phillips' sense as providing a conceptual elucidation or understanding of the grammar of religious belief, presupposes a substantive religious position. Philosophy in this sense is neither neutral, nor descriptive, but prescriptive - stipulative as to the nature and depth grammar of religious belief. It is not, as B. Mitchell claims, that Phillips' position is determined "by what he conceives to be philosophically tenable", (41) but rather that his analysis of the nature of the depth grammar of religious belief and concepts itself rests and is based on a 'substantive view of religion'.

S E C T I O N I3

Very, very briefly in this section I wish to look at certain difficulties facing the Wittgensteinian approach, as so far outlined, to problems in the philosophy of religion and suggest an alternative strategy, which could be developed from the 'later philosophy' of Wittgenstein, and applied to these same problems.

The first question I want to pose is this. What sense, if any, can be given to the idea that there is a distinctive religious language?

> "... the religious believer must be a participant in a shared language. He must learn the use of religious concepts. What he learns is religious language; a language which he participates in along with other believers. What I am suggesting is that to know how to use this language is to know God." (1)

What particularly interests me, in the above passage, is not what Phillips actually means when he claims, 'to know how to use this language is to know God' - that we have already discussed - but the question of whether or not any sense can be given to the claim that there is a distinctive language called religious language. B. Williams suggests there could be at least "five possible distinguishing marks" (2) to enable one to distinguish one language from another. That is,

> "one language might be distinguished from another by the types of logical relation holding within it; by its subject matter, by its use of

> technical terms, by its purposes; or more generally by the activities with which its use is associated."

Although he does add that

> "it would ... be an illusion to suppose that these five, even if they were satisfactorily distinguished from one another, would be competitors for the position of the one and only distinguishing mark of one language from another; it is rather that from the inter-relation of features like these that we can, in particular cases, justifiably claim to distinguish one type of discourse from another." (3)

Now, I believe that Williams is <u>wrong</u> here in thinking that one can distinguish, in this kind of way, different discourses or languages from each other. I do not think it makes sense to talk of religious language as being a kind of <u>distinct</u> language within Language itself. Let me illustrate this point with reference to Williams' five criteria. First of all, what does Williams <u>mean</u> by 'logical relations', and is it conceivable there are different types of <u>logical relations</u> holding within 'religious language'? This would seem doubtful, for surely any <u>language</u>, to be even identified as a <u>language</u> in the first place, must subscribe to some such general logical principles as, for example, the principle of non-contradiction. Secondly, it is claimed, one could identify 'religious'language' by reference to its subject matter. Well I suppose one could say that 'religious language' is language about God, but then not <u>all</u> religions have as the focus of their worship, God and further not all sentences which might be characterised as 'religious' are necessarily about God, except perhaps in a very

oblique way. Thirdly, religious language, we are told, is a distinct language because it uses technical terms. And it is true there are technical terms used by religious people, but (a) not all allegedly religious sentences make specific reference to such terms, and (b) such technical terms as there are, e.g. 'salvation', seem to derive at least part of their meaning and the rules for their use from their employment in non-religious situations.

Fourthly, we are told it is by 'its purposes' that we can distinguish 'religious language' from 'non-religious' language. Certainly it is true that people may have specific religious purposes in mind when using religious terms and concepts - the purpose may be to worship God, thank God, petition God. But would one claim that the same sentence or sentences <u>divorced</u> from such a context of praise and worship, for example, the sentence 'God is a good and wise God', affirmed by a believer in worship and stated by a philosopher about to consider the traditional problem of evil, belong to different languages? It seems unlikely that one would, and yet there is a point of importance here to be noted, which I shall presently come to. The fifth criterion offered is that we could identify or distinguish 'religious language' from other languages by reference to the 'activities with which its use is associated'. This criterion is not unlike the fourth criterion and again is open to objection. Certainly there are <u>distinctive</u> religious activities; there is praise, worship, the performance of certain rituals and language is used as <u>part</u> of the performance of the religious activity. But surely it would again be strange to claim that the exact same sentence or phrase,

uttered within the activity of performing a certain ritual and uttered outside the context of the ritual /'O God' uttered as an invocation within a ritual and 'O God' uttered as an expression of fear, alarm or disgust in a non-religious context/ would belong to different languages? Further, many apparently religious uses of language occur outside such a context (though again, as with the fourth criterion, there is an important point to be noted here).

Thus I doubt generally whether we have been provided with a set of criteria to enable us to distinguish 'religious language' from 'non-religious language'. However, it may be argued that I have been rather unfair to Williams in my argument because he was not suggesting that any <u>one</u> of the <u>five</u> criteria would be alone sufficient to enable one to distinguish 'religious language' from 'non-religious' language; rather, he was suggesting that it was from the 'inter-relation' of features, such as the ones identified, that one could distinguish one type of language from another. Now this is certainly true, but I doubt whether Williams' case would be proved if we did consider the criteria not singly but together. However I do not, at this stage, wish to argue the point because it seems to me that the <u>whole direction</u> of Williams' argument is misplaced. That is, it seems to me that the search for criteria to identify or distinguish one language from another within Language, in this case 'religious language' from 'non-religious language', is futile, because it is a nonsense to claim that there is such a thing as <u>religious language</u> - and certainly our examination of Williams' criteria has not helped us to distinguish 'religious language' from 'non-religious language'

or given sense to the claim that 'religious language' is a distinctive or different language, a separate kind of language. Rather, there are distinctive religious uses of language [not of religious language, but of language]. This is why I said there was a point to be noted when discussing Williams' fourth and fifth criteria, because it seemed to me that it is by reference to the purposes for which language is employed and the contexts within which it is employed that we can give sense to the claim that there are distinctive religious uses of language.

But surely to talk of religious uses of language is to talk of what Wittgenstein might call the 'language games' we play with words and sentences - 'the countless different kinds of use of what we call ... "words", "sentences"'. It is to spotlight the 'games' we play with language. And indeed Phillips does refer to the term 'religion' covering a 'family of language-games'. (4) However, he does also refer to the term 'religion' covering a 'language-game' (5) or 'language-games' (6) and indeed, at one stage, he refers to religious belief as a 'language-game' (7) and, at another stage, to religious beliefs as 'distinctive language-games'. (8) The term 'religion' also seems to cover a 'mode of discourse' (9) or 'religious discourse'. (10) Indeed, while noting what can be covered by the term 'religion', it might be useful to note that religion is variously referred to by Phillips as a 'form of life', (11) as being constituted by 'forms of life' (12) and indeed on other occasions as 'a way of life' (13) or 'a mode of social life'. (14) For Malcolm, too, religion is 'a form of life'. (15)

I think it might be interesting, at this stage, to pause in my exposition and note how variegated a use is made of the 'terms' 'language game' and 'form of life' by Phillips. One would have thought from my exposition of the later philosophy of Wittgenstein that the term 'religion' would cover 'a family of language games' and that religion would include several forms of life. However, as we have seen, 'religion' can also cover a 'language-game', or 'language-games' and indeed religious beliefs can be regarded as distinctive 'language games'. Indeed, further, while Phillips does on one occasion refer to religion as being constituted by 'forms of life', he normally refers to religion as a 'form of life'. Now this is important because terms like 'language-game' and 'form of life' are not philosophically neutral - they are not philosophical innocents. For example, the term 'form of life' is not an elliptical way of referring to a 'way or ways of life' - despite the fact that Phillips seems prepared on occasions so to use it. For Wittgenstein, 'forms of life', 'language games' represented the 'given', that from which philosophy must begin. They can neither be justified, nor explained - explained away - but are recognised to be there - 'like our life'.

Indeed P. Sherry, whose critical work in this area is very important, states: "As regards the question of justifying forms of life, Phillips' argument is vitiated by his regarding religion as a form of life, and not as ... a collection of forms of life, language-games etc." (16) However, it should be noted that even if Phillips' argument is stated as Sherry believes it should be, Sherry still is of the opinion that the argument fails. As he states;

> "but it does seem a sensible question to ask why people pray or worship, and why these language-games are not a universal form of human behaviour ... surely it is a highly interesting question for philosophy to ask why certain forms of behaviour, linguistic or otherwise, are common to all mankind ... while others are not so." (17)

And of course one would have to agree here because, as Sherry claims, "there are some activities, responses, forms of life and language-games which can be appraised as wholes". (18) However, while agreeing with the general conclusions drawn by Sherry in this area, I think Sherry is mistaken insofar as he seems to imply on occasions that Wittgenstein's use of the terms 'language-game' and 'form of life' was somehow more 'strict' than, for example, Phillips' use [Phillips being thought of as deviating from some acknowledged 'norm']; or again when he denies that "Wittgenstein would have approved of the use of the 'this language game is played' move as part of a religious apologetic." (19) With regard simply to the first point, as we have seen, Wittgenstein did seem to regard religion as a 'form of life'. Certainly it is true that in the Investigations the examples given there of 'forms of life' are hoping and feeling certain, and examples of 'language games' given are asking, thanking, praying, etc., all of which would lead one to suspect that for Wittgenstein the term 'religion' should cover 'a family of language-games' and religion should be a 'collection of forms of life'. Again, however, Wittgenstein does refer to mathematics as being a 'language-game' and he also speaks of special technical languages, e.g. descriptive geometry and chemical symbolism, as 'language-games'. (20)

What I do think impresses itself on one immediately is, as it has been expressed, "the seeming heterogeneity of the collection" (21) and one indeed wonders whether, given such terms as 'language-game' and 'form of life' with such 'loose' criteria of application and identity, anything of philosophical importance and substance can be said to depend on their use.

There is no religious language, we said, but there are religious uses of language and for Phillips, we stated, this assertion found its expression in the claim that the term 'religion' 'covers a family of language games'. But herein lies a further difficulty and it is a difficulty which not only faces Phillips but is also present in Wittgenstein's work as well. Indeed it seems to me that there is an unresolved dilemma underlying Wittgenstein's conception of language in the later period of his philosophy. I have already stated the 'two poles' of the dilemma in my account of the use of the terms 'language' and 'language-games' in Wittgenstein's later philosophy but I have not, as yet, presented or stated the dilemma. Allow me to do so now. On the one hand, with reference to one model, 'a language game' can be considered a complete language in itself and, on the other hand, and with reference to another model, as being one of a 'family' of language-games, which family of 'language-games' constitutes language. That is, a language is a family of 'language games'.

Now so stated this dilemma gives rise to the following problem, which is well articulated by Rhees:

> "When he (Wittgenstein) says that any language is a family of language-games, and that any of

> these might be a complete language by itself, he does not say whether people who might take part in several such games would be speaking the same language in each of them. In fact, I find it hard to see on this view that they would ever be speaking a language." (22)

Now this is true and Phillips, who considers Rhees' difficulties here, also finds that they pose a problem for his position as well. For Phillips:

> "one reason why Wittgenstein said that each language-game is complete is that he wanted to rid us of the supposition that all propositions have a general form. The different language games do not make up one big game. For the most part this is what I have been stressing in relation to religious language games ... but it gives rise to new problems. The different games do not make up a game, and yet Wittgenstein wants to say that a language, the same language, is a family of language-games - that is, that this is the kind of unity a language has. At this point th there is a strain in the analogy between language and a game." (23)

Now note two points here. First of all, Phillips admits that his stress has been on the separateness of 'religious language games' and, secondly, his conclusion that, given that this is where his stress has been and the problems which this can give rise to, a certain tension must exist in 'the analogy between language and a game'. But how does this tension find expression in relation to religious phenomena? Well it would seem to be the case, as Phillips appears to be saying, that if one insists on stressing the separateness of the 'religious language-games', religious practices and behaviour cease to

have any importance and become themselves a kind of game. As Phillips states:

> "if we think of religious worship as cut off from everything outside the formalities of worship, it ceases to be worship and becomes an esoteric game. What is the difference between a rehearsal for an act of worship and the actual act of worship? The answer cannot be in terms of responses to signs, since the responses to signs may be correct in the rehearsal. The difference has to do with the point the activity has in the life of the worshippers." (24)

It is only if religion relates to the world, takes the world seriously, that religious beliefs can retain any force. Indeed religion must have

> "something to say about aspects of human existence which are quite intelligible without reference to religion: birth, death, joy ... The connection between these and religion is not contingent ... The force of religious beliefs depends, in part, on what is outside religion." (25)

What is interesting here is the claim that there is some necessary connection between non-religious phenomena and religious belief. How does this connection find expression? Is it the case that the non-religious facts provide the justification or the grounds for the religious belief? For Phillips, as we might expect, this last point cannot be the case:

> "To say that the meaning of religious beliefs is partly dependent on non-religious facts is not to say that these beliefs are justified by, or could be inferred from, the facts in question." (26)

But, Phillips continues, and this is crucial and important here:

> "having recognised, correctly, that the meaning of religious beliefs is partly dependent on features of human life outside religion, philosophers conclude, wrongly, that one would be contradicting oneself if one claimed to recognise this dependence, and also claimed that religious beliefs are distinctive language games." (27)

However note now that we have a new adjective qualifying 'religious language games'. It is not merely the case that the 'games' are part of the 'given' but they have a 'distinctive', particular, unique role in the language - a role which is separate from the function or role of all other sets of 'language games' in the language. (28) Now here, what I say is tentative, but it seems to me that we can partly trace the origin, the genesis of Phillips' 'supernatural religion', 'supernatural God', back to the claim that the 'language-games' of religion have a distinctive role, a distinctive and particular job to play in the language. Let me very quickly explain what I mean.

First of all, I am not denying a point made earlier, that Phillips' account of the role of the philosopher plotting the depth grammar of religious belief and language presupposes a substantive religious point of view. What I am saying now, however, is that once one distinguishes religious beliefs as a set of 'language games' which play a distinctive role in the language, separate from, in particular, the role played by 'scientific language games' or 'factual language games', this limits what can and what cannot be said in the language; in

particular, what can and what cannot be said of God. Indeed, as M. Charlesworth points out, we seem to be prevented from using the concept of God "as though it were descriptive of some entity, since this would be to confuse the functions of religious language with that of scientific language." (29) And one could continue the list. It may be, in fact <u>is</u> characteristic of certain 'religious believers' to claim that God can intervene in a causal manner in events in the world, but such a claim is not permissible for Phillips, for in making it one is conflating the function of 'scientific language games' with that of 'religious language games'; cause being a concept which is only 'at home' in the 'scientific language game'. Again, it is characteristic of certain religious believers to affirm that by Immortality they mean survival of death or at least that their belief in Immortality entails their survival of death. But such a belief is not a 'proper' religious belief for Phillips because it entails conflating, again, two very different 'language games'; the games we play with facts, 'factual language games' [survival after death being considered a fact] which are a species of 'scientific language games' and distinctive 'religious language games'.

It is <u>not</u> the case, as has recently been claimed, that

> "Phillips rejects the efficacy of petitionary prayer, the belief that life goes on beyond death, the belief that God intervenes in the world, the idea that the Last Judgement is an event, and the belief that all evil will be made right some day, in all these respects providing clear evidence of the intrusion of science upon his religion." (30)

It is rather because of his unwillingness to allow science to intrude - which would for Phillips permit a conflation of 'scientific language-games' with 'religious language-games' - that Phillips rejects the above mentioned beliefs. Further, if Phillips argues like this stressing the separateness and the distinctiveness of the 'language-games of religion' - the 'completeness' of the 'religious language-game' - aren't we in a sense presented again with our old problem? The suggestion, that is, that one can conceive of the 'language-games of religion', the 'religious language-games', as representing a distinctive religious language? And, of course, in an important sense we are.

But note, we only arrive at this position if we stress one model of Wittgenstein's account of the nature of language — the model, that is, which claims that a 'language-game' or set of 'language games' could be considered a complete language by itself. But there is another model, a model which stresses that a language is a 'family' of 'language-games', that the 'family relationship' between 'language-games' constitutes the kind of unity a language has. Now it is obvious that Phillips and indeed Wittgenstein himself seem to have the first model in mind when discussing religious belief and concepts, but might it not be more fruitful to stress the second model? A model which not only stresses the differences between 'language games' but also equally stresses the sameness. As G. Downing states when discussing the topic (31):

> "Obviously, along the lines of Wittgenstein's original analogy, there may be members of a family who are very different from each other,

> they are, respectively, similar only to a third member; or there may be an even more extended chain of resemblance. But there is no 'natural' boundary between them ... - there is only the third member whom they differently resemble. Language-games, too, are not separated by boundaries, only by other games that they differently resemble. And, depending on the way you look at it, you might as easily say 'joined' as 'separated'." (32)

One point which stands out as rather surprising, in both Wittgenstein's and Phillips' account of the nature of religious belief, is the basically essentialist approach they both adopt and practice. For both, there seems to be only one grammar of religious belief, only one genuine kind of religious belief. Indeed the term 'superstition' is never very far from the lips of either to characterise any kind of 'religious belief' which they regard as suspect. Now of course there are reasons for this approach, which we have already gone into, but what particularly interests me at the moment is how [if I can be forgiven for uttering such a strange assertion] characteristically un-Wittgensteinian such an approach, as adopted by both Wittgenstein and Phillips, is. We are not 'here taught differences' but rather 'sameness'. Indeed wasn't it W. James, whom Wittgenstein greatly admired, who said, when defining the word 'religion';

> "... the very fact that they (the definitions of religion) are so many and so different from one another is enough to prove that the word 'religion' cannot stand for any single principle or essence, but is rather a collective name ... We may very likely find no one essence, but many

characters which may alternately be equally important in religion." (33)

And what applies to the word 'religion' applies equally to the nature of religious belief and truth.

However, it may be argued, while one may accept the point you are making against Wittgenstein and Phillips, doesn't it or couldn't it be applied equally well against a position you have adopted during your argument? You have constantly complained that the account both Phillips and Wittgenstein present us with fails to meet or cohere with '<u>traditional</u>' Christian belief and surely the assumption that either there is such a 'traditional belief', or a 'traditional account' of belief, is equally an essentialist assumption - the assumption that there is a kind of essence of, in particular, Christian belief. And, it must be admitted that to this charge I would have to plead guilty, although at the same time remaining convinced that Christian belief does have an essence. But equally, it could be argued, both Wittgenstein and Phillips would most likely remain convinced that they too have discovered the <u>essence</u> of religious belief.

And this, I think, is the crucial point. To affirm or practice the '<u>second</u> model' would be to eschew the search for essences of religious belief, truth etc., but would rather involve plotting the various kinds of sameness, difference and relationships existing between religious beliefs and, not only between <u>religious</u> beliefs, but also between religious and <u>non</u>-religious belief. It would also mean, pace Wittgenstein and Phillips, plotting the use of the terms 'fact', 'evidence', 'reason' etc., as they apply and are used in both religious

and non-religious 'language-games' and not anchoring their use to any particular or distinctive 'language-game' or set of 'games' - in particular, the 'scientific language-game'. That at least would be a very small part of the programme and it represents, I would argue, an alternative strategy which would be in keeping with a more balanced development of certain 'insights' to be found in the later philosophy of Wittgenstein.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

(a) BOOKS

1. G. E. M. ANSCOMBE, AN INTRODUCTION TO WITTGENSTEIN'S TRACTATUS (Hutchinson & Co., London, 1967)
2. J. BARNES, THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT (Macmillan, London, 1972)
3. S. C. BROWN, DO RELIGIOUS CLAIMS MAKE SENSE? (S.C.M. Press Ltd., London, 1969)
4. M. J. CHARLESWORTH, PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION: THE HISTORIC APPROACHES (Macmillan, London, 1972)
5. I. M. COPI and R. W. BEARD eds., ESSAYS ON WITTGENSTEIN'S TRACTATUS (Butler & Tanner, London, 1966)
6. M. DURRANT, THE LOGICAL STATUS OF "GOD" (Macmillan, London, 1973)
7. P. ENGLEMANN, LETTERS FROM LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN WITH A MEMOIR (Blackwell, Oxford, 1967)
8. A. FLEW, GOD AND PHILOSOPHY (Hutchinson & Co., London, 1968)
9. A. FLEW and A. MACINTYRE eds., NEW ESSAYS IN PHILOSOPHICAL THEOLOGY (S.C.M. Press Ltd., London, 1955)
10. P. GEACH, GOD AND THE SOUL (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1969)
11. P. M. S. HACKER, INSIGHT AND ILLUSION (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1972)
12. P. HELM, THE VARIETIES OF BELIEF (G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., London, 1973)

13. J. HICK, GOD AND THE UNIVERSE OF FAITHS (Macmillan Press, London, 1973)

14. J. HICK, ARGUMENTS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1970)

15. J. HICK, ed., FAITH AND THE PHILOSOPHERS (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1964)

16. J. HICK and A. C. McGILL, eds., THE MANY FACED ARGUMENT (Macmillan & Co., London, 1967)

17. W. D. HUDSON, WITTGENSTEIN AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF (Macmillan Press, London, 1975)

18. W. D. HUDSON, A PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO RELIGION (Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1974)

19. A. JEFFNER, THE STUDY OF RELIGIOUS LANGUAGE (S.C.M. Press Ltd., London, 1972)

20. S. KIERKEGAARD, PHILOSOPHICAL FRAGMENTS, translated by D. F. SWENSON (Princeton University Press, U.S.A., 1966, first printed 1936)

21. S. KIERKEGAARD, CONCLUDING UNSCIENTIFIC POSTSCRIPT, translated by D. F. SWENSON (Princeton University Press, U.S.A., 1964, first printed 1941)

22. E. D. KLEMKE, ed., ESSAYS ON WITTGENSTEIN (University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 1971)

23. N. MALCOLM, LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN: A MEMOIR (Oxford University Press, 1967, first published 1958)

24. B. MITCHELL, THE JUSTIFICATION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF (Macmillan Press, London, 1973)

25. B. MITCHELL, ed., THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (Oxford University Press, 1971)

26. K. NIELSEN, CONTEMPORARY CRITIQUES OF RELIGION (Macmillan Press, London, 1971)

27. K. NIELSEN, SCEPTICISM (Macmillan Press, London, 1973)

28. T. PENELHUM, PROBLEMS OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE (Macmillan Press, London, 1971)

29. D. Z. PHILLIPS, THE CONCEPT OF PRAYER (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1965)

30. D. Z. PHILLIPS, FAITH AND PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1970)

31. D. Z. PHILLIPS, DEATH AND IMMORTALITY (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1970)

32. D. Z. PHILLIPS, ed., RELIGION AND UNDERSTANDING (Blackwell, Oxford, 1967)

33. D. Z. PHILLIPS and H. O. MOUNCE, MORAL PRACTICES (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1969)

34. N. PIKE, GOD AND TIMELESSNESS (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1970)

35. V. PRATT, RELIGION AND SECULARISATION (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1970)

36. G. PITCHER, ed., WITTGENSTEIN: THE PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1966)

37. A. PLANTINGA, GOD AND OTHER MINDS (Cornell University Press, New York, 1969)

38. R. RHEES, WITHOUT ANSWERS (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1969)

39. R. RHEES, DISCUSSIONS OF WITTGENSTEIN (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1970)

40. N. SMART, PHILOSOPHERS AND RELIGIOUS TRUTH (S.C.M. Press Ltd., London, 1969)

41. N. SMART, THE CONCEPT OF WORSHIP (Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1972)

42. E. K. SPECHT, THE FOUNDATIONS OF WITTGENSTEIN'S LATE PHILOSOPHY, translated by D. E. WALFORD (Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1969)

43. R. TRIGG, REASON AND COMMITMENT (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1973)

44. G. N. A. VESEY, ed., TALK OF GOD (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., London, 1969)

45. G. N. A. VESEY, ed., UNDERSTANDING WITTGENSTEIN (Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1974)

46. B. R. WILSON, ed., RATIONALITY (Blackwell, Oxford, 1970)

47. P. WINCH, THE IDEA OF A SOCIAL SCIENCE AND ITS RELATION TO PHILOSOPHY (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1970)

48. P. WINCH, ed., STUDIES IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF WITTGENSTEIN (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1969)

49. L. WITTGENSTEIN, NOTEBOOKS 1914-16, edited by G. H. von Wright and G. E. M. Anscombe, with an English translation by G. E. M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1961)

50. L. WITTGENSTEIN, TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS, translated by D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuiness (Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1961)

51. L. WITTGENSTEIN, THE BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS (Blackwell, Oxford, 1969, first published 1958)

52. L. WITTGENSTEIN, PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1968, first edition 1953)

53. L. WITTGENSTEIN, REMARKS ION THE FOUNDATION OF MATHEMATICS,

ed. by G. H. von Wright, R. Rhees, G. E. M. Anscombe, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1967, first published 1956)

54. L. WITTGENSTEIN, ON CERTAINTY, ed. by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, translated by D. Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1969)

55. L. WITTGENSTEIN, ZETTEL, ed. by G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe (Blackwell, Oxford, 1967)

56. L. WITTGENSTEIN, LECTURES AND CONVERSATIONS ON AESTHETICS, PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS BELIEF, ed. by C. Barrett (Blackwell, Oxford, 1970, first printed 1966)

(b) ARTICLES

The articles listed below represent merely a few of the more important articles which deal with topics covered in the text.

1. R. H. BELL, 'Wittgenstein and Descriptive Theology' in RELIGIOUS STUDIES (vol. 5, 1969)

2. A. BRUNTON, 'A model for the Religious Philosophy of D. Z. Phillips' in ANALYSIS (vol. 31, 1970-71)

3. C. CHERRY, 'Understanding, Understanding Religious Belief' in RELIGIOUS STUDIES (vol. 10, No. 4, 1974)

4. R. C. COBURN, 'Professor Malcolm on God' in AUSTRALASIAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY (vol. 39, 1961)

5. F. B. DILLEY, 'The Status of Religious Beliefs' in AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY (vol. 13, No. 1, Jan. 1976)

6. F. G. DOWNING, 'Games, Families, the Public, and Religion' in PHILOSOPHY (vol. XLVII, Jan. 1972)

7. M. DURRANT, 'Is the Justification of Religious Belief a Possible Enterprise' in RELIGIOUS STUDIES (vol. 9, No. 4, 1973)

8. J. H. GILL, 'On Reaching Bedrock' in METAPHILOSOPHY (vol. 5, No. 4, 1974)

9. C. K. GRANT, 'From World to God' in Proceedings of the ARISTOTELIAN SOCIETY (suppl. vol. LXI, 1967)

10. J. HICK, 'The Justification of Religious Belief' in THEOLOGY (vol. LXXI, 1968)

11. R. F. HOLLAND, 'Religious Discourse and Theological Discourse' in AUSTRALASIAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY (vol. 34, 1956)

12. J. F. M. HUNTER, '"Forms of Life" in Wittgenstein's Philosophical Investigations' in AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY (vol. 5, 1968)

13. J. KELLENBERGER, 'The Ontological Principle and God's Existence' in PHILOSOPHY (vol. XLV, 1970)

14. J. LIPNER, 'Truth-Claim and Inter-Religious Dialogue' in RELIGIOUS STUDIES (vol. 12, 1976)

15. C. LYAS, 'On the Coherence of Christian Atheism' in PHILOSOPHY (vol. XLV, 1970)

16. H. O. MOUNCE, 'Understanding a Primitive Society' in PHILOSOPHY (vol. 48, 1973)

17. B. F. McGUINNESS, 'The Mysticism of the TRACTATUS' in PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW (vol. 75, 1966)

18. K. NIELSEN, 'Wittgensteinian Fideism' in PHILOSOPHY (vol. XLII, 1967)

19. K. NIELSEN, 'Religious Discourse and Arguing from Ordinary Language' in METAPHILOSOPHY (vol. 5, 1974)

20. H. PALMER, 'Understanding First' in THEOLOGY (vol. LXXI, 1968)

21. D. Z. PHILLIPS, 'The Problem of Evil - A Reply' (A paper given at a Philosophy of Religion Conference held at Lancaster University, 1975)

22. A. RALLS, 'Ontological Presupposition in Religion' in SOPHIA (vol. III, 1964)

23. E. SCHAPER, 'Symposium on Saying and Showing in Heidegger and Wittgenstein' in JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH SOCIETY FOR PHENOMENOLOGY (vol. 3, 1972)

24. M. SCHWYZER, 'Thought and Reality: the Metaphysics of Kant and Wittgenstein' in THE PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY (vol. 23, 1973)

25. P. SHERRY, 'Truth and the "Religious Language-game"' in PHILOSOPHY (vol. XLVII, Jan. 1972)

26. P. SHERRY, 'Is Religion a "Form of Life"?' in AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY (vol. 9, 1972)

27. S. SUTHERLAND, 'On the Idea of a Form of Life' in RELIGIOUS STUDIES (vol. 11, 1975)

28. J. C. THORNTON, 'Religious Belief and "Reductionism"' in SOPHIA (vol. V, 1966)

29. J. WALKER, 'Wittgenstein's Earlier Ethics' in AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL QUARTERLY (vol. 5, 1968)

30. L. WITTGENSTEIN, 'A Lecture on Ethics' in THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW (vol. 74, 1965)

31. F. WAISMANN, 'Notes on Talks with Wittgenstein' published with English translation by M. Black in THE PHILOSOPHICAL REVIEW (vol. 74, 1965)

NOTES AND REFERENCES

Publication details are not given where these appear in the Bibliography.

ABBREVIATIONS

N.	NOTEBOOKS 1914-1916:	L. Wittgenstein
T.	TRACTATUS LOGICO-PHILOSOPHICUS:	L. Wittgenstein
B.B.	BLUE AND BROWN BOOKS:	L. Wittgenstein
P.I.	PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS:	L. Wittgenstein
O.C.	ON CERTAINTY:	L. Wittgenstein
Z.	ZETTEL:	L. Wittgenstein
L.R.B.	'LECTURES ON RELIGIOUS BELIEF':	L. Wittgenstein
C.P.	CONCEPT OF PRAYER:	D. Z. Phillips
F.P.E.	FAITH AND PHILOSOPHICAL ENQUIRY:	D. Z. Phillips
D.I.	DEATH AND IMMORTALITY:	D. Z. Phillips

INTRODUCTION

1. Concept of Prayer, Faith and Philosophical Enquiry and Death and Immortality.

2. 'Anselm's Ontological Arguments' reprinted in The Many Faced Argument, eds. Hick and McGill. See also 'Is it a Religious Belief that 'God Exists'?' in Faith and the Philosophers, ed. J. Hick.

3. The Idea of a Social Science and 'Understanding a Primitive Society' reprinted in Religion and Understanding, ed. D. Z. Phillips.

4. Blue and Brown Books, Philosophical Investigations, On Certainty, Zettel.

5. Notebooks, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.

6. Notebooks, pp. 72-91.

7. 'Religious Discourse and Theological Discourse' and 'The Miraculous' reprinted in Religion and Understanding, ed. D. Z. Phillips.

8. Without Answers, Chps. 11, 12 and 13.

SECTION 1 : PART A

1. N. p. 79.

2. An anecdote, related by Russell, concerning an evening Russell spent with an agitated Wittgenstein pacing about his room deep in thought.

3. I shall in future simply refer to the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus as the Tractatus in the text.

4. T. 6.44.

5. T. 6.45.

6. T. 6.522.

7. T. 4.1212.

8. N. p. 51.

9. T. 4.003.

10. T. 6.52.

11. T. 4.11.

12. T. 6.53.

13. T. 6.5.

14. T. 6.521.

15. Engelmann, Letters from L. Wittgenstein, p. 97.

16. Ibid., p. 143.

17. Preface to the Tractatus, p. 3; see also T. 7. (the conclusion) "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."

18. T. 6.41.

19. T. 6.432.

20. T. 6.421.

21. T. 3.5; 4; 4.001.

22. As Anscombe states in her Introduction to the Tractatus, (p. 82) 'I once had occasion to remark to Wittgenstein that he was supposed to have a mystical streak. 'Like a yellow streak,' he replied; and that is pretty well how the Vienna Circle felt about certain things in the Tractatus." The point of this remark by Wittgenstein is, I believe, only fully understood if it is realised that Wittgenstein is commenting on the Vienna Circle's assessment of his mysticism and not, as I think Anscombe takes the point of the remark to be, on his own assessment of the importance of the mystical to him - but more of this later.

23. T. 6.13.

24. Excerpt from a letter from Wittgenstein to Russell, quoted by Anscombe in her Introduction, p. 161.

25. p. 111.

26. I shall use the Notebooks as source material only when the ideas expressed there seem to me to be a natural continuation of ideas expressed in the Tractatus.

27. Both published in the Philosophical Review, vol. 74, 1965.

28. T. p. 3.

29. T. p. 3.

30. T. 1.1.

31. T. 2.

32. T. 2.031.

33. T. 2.03.

34. T. 2.0141.

35. T. 2.02 and T. 2.021.

36. T. 2.0211.

37. T. 4.21.

38. T. 4.116.

39. T. 2.02 and T. 2.0201.

40. T. 4.22.

41. T. 3.26.

42. T. 3.203.

43. T. 4.221.

44. T. 4.21.

45. T. 5.3.

46. T. 3.23.

47. T. 3.3.

48. T. 3.203.

49. T. 4.0312.

50. T. 4.021.

51. T. 4.027 and 4.03.

52. T. 4.03.

53. See, for example, K. Popper's account in British Philosophy in Mid-Century, (Allen & Unwin, 1957), pp. 163-4.

54. Part of a biographical sketch contained in N. Malcolm's L. Wittgenstein: A Memoir, p. 7.

55. Ibid., pp.7-8.

56. T. 4.1121.

57. The topic of empirical verification is not introduced in the Tractatus. The only proposition there that seems to resemble the notion of empirical verification is the following: "To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true" (T. 4.024). What this states is the Tractarian doctrine that the sense of a proposition consists in its truth conditions. We know what a proposition means when we know what has to be the case if it is true. Nothing is explicitly stated here concerning verification and the proposition immediately following the above remark illustrates that Wittgenstein was not thinking about verification at all. He states; "One can understand it, therefore, without knowing whether it is true."

58. T. 3.21.

59. T. 4.061.

60. T. 4.0311.

61. T. 2.141.

62. T. 2.202.

63. T. 2.15.

64. T. 2.18.

65. T. 2.1514.

66. T. 2.161.

67. T. 2.173 and 2.174.

68. T. 2.18.

69. "A proposition is a propositional sign in its projective relation to the world" (T. 3.12).

70. T. 3.21.

71. T. 4.0312.

72. T. 4.12.

73. T. 4.1272.

74. T. 4.126.

75. T. 4.126.

76. T. 4.1274.

77. T. 4.126.

78. T. 4.003.

79. T. 6.53.

80. T. 5.634.

81. T. 5.634 and T. 2.225.

82. T. 6.1.

83. T. 6.11 and T. 4.461.

84. T. 6.125.

85. T. 4.462.

86. Anscombe, Introduction, p.78.

87. T. 4.12.

88. T. 4.12.

89. T. 5.552.

90. T. 6.13.

91. T. 6.44.

92. 'The Mysticism of the Tractatus', p. 311.

93. T. 5.5562.

94. T. 5.5521 provides substantiation for the claim that the two feelings share the same identical referent.

95. 'The mysticism of the Tractatus', p. 315.

96. P.I. 89.

97. T. 6.124.

98. T. 6.124.

99. T. 5.61.

100. T. 5.6.

101. T. 5.62.

102. T. 5.62 and 5.621 and 5.63.

103. T. 5.631 and 5.641.

104. T. 5.632 and 5.641.

105. T. 5.633 and 5.6331.

106. Insight and Illusion, p. 63.

107. T. 5.641.

108. N. p. 49.

109. N. p. 79.

110. Insight and Illusion, p. 76.

111. Ibid., p. 77.

112. N. pp. 72-3.

113. N. p. 74.

114. T. 6.432.

115. T. 1.

116. A Memoir, p. 71.

117. N. p. 74.

118. T. 1.1.

119. N. Garver, 'Wittgenstein's Pantheism' reprinted in Klemke, Essays on Wittgenstein, p. 127.

120. T. 5.4711.

121. T. 4.5.

122. N. p. 79.

123. T. 6.421.

124. T. 6.42.

125. T. 6.41.

126. N. p. 74.

127. N. p. 73.

128. N. p. 79.

129. N. p. 77. I presume this explains why suicide is 'the elementary sin'. Suicide would be the destruction of the ethical will and since it is of the subject that good and evil can be predicated it would be the destruction of the very possibility of good and evil (N. p. 91).

130. N. p. 73.

131. N. p. 87.

132. N. p. 80.

133. T. 6.373, T. 6.374, T. 6.43 and N. p. 73.

134. N. p. 74.

135. N. p. 74.

136. N. p. 74.

137. N. p. 74.

138. N. p. 80.

139. N. p. 78.

140. N. p. 75.

141. In 'Notes on Talks with Wittgenstein' Waismann asks Wittgenstein: "Is the existence of the world connected with the ethical?" Wittgenstein replies: "Men have felt a connection here and have expressed it in this way: God the Father created the world, while God the Son ... is the ethical. That men have first divided the Godhead and then united it, points to there being a connection here." p. 16.

142. T. 6.422.

143. N. p. 78.

144. N. p. 74.

145. N. p. 76.

146. N. p. 73.

147. T. 6.4311.

148. T. 6.4312.

149. N. p. 83. It is at this point that we have postulated the nature of the connection between art and ethics. In the Tractatus at 6.421 Wittgenstein says; "Ethics and aesthetics are one and the same." What he means is that a work of art, just like the good life, is the object seen sub specie aeternitatis. It is, as it were isolated and viewed together with space and time.

150. N. p. 81.

151. Preface to the Tractatus, p. 3.

152. 'Mysticism of the Tractatus', pp. 323-4. The account of cosmic consciousness is to be found in W. James' Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 198, and James obtains his account and example from R. M. Bucke, a Canadian psychiatrist.

153. 'Lecture on Ethics', p. 7.

154. Ibid., p. 5.

155. Ibid., p. 6.

156. Ibid., p. 6.

157. Ibid., p. 7.

158. Ibid., p. 6.

159. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

160. 'Notes on Talks with Wittgenstein', p. 13.

161. 'Lecture on Ethics', p. 11.

162. Ibid., p. 9.

163. Ibid., p. 10.

164. Ibid., p. 8.

165. Ibid., pp. 8 and 10.

166. Ibid., p. 10.

167. Ibid., p. 8.

168. Ibid., pp. 8-9.

169. 'Notes on Talks with Wittgenstein', pp. 12-13.

170. 'Lecture on Ethics', p. 10.

171. Ibid., p. 10.

172. Ibid., p. 11.

173. Ibid., p. 11.

174. Ibid., p. 11.

175. Ibid., p. 11.

176. Ibid., p. 11.

177. Ibid., p. 11.

178. Ibid., p. 11.

179. Introduction to the Tractatus, p. 170.

180. 'Symposium on Saying and Showing in Heidegger and Wittgenstein', pp. 36-41.

181. Ibid., p. 38.

182. Ibid., p. 39.

183. Wittgenstein and Religious Belief, p. 83.

184. 'The Problem of Evil', p. 13.

185. D.I. p. 15.

186. Quoted in J. Passmore, A Hundred Years of Philosophy, p. 153.

187. 'Wittgenstein's Earlier Ethics', p. 224.

188. L. Wittgenstein: A Memoir, p. 71.

189. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 432.

SECTION 1 : PART B

1. I shall refer to the Philosophical Investigations as simply Investigations in the text.

2. Insight and Illusion, p. 145.
3. P.I. 43.
4. P.I. 432.
5. P.I. 199.
6. P.I. 96.
7. P.I. 23.
8. P.I. 11.
9. L. Wittgenstein: A Memoir, p. 65.
10. P.I. 23.
11. B.B. p. 65.
12. P.I. 65-67.
13. P.I. 25.
14. P.I. 654.
15. P.I. 655.
16. P.I. 656.
17. P.I. 415 and O.C. 559.
18. P.I. 19.
19. P.I. 23.
20. P.I. p. 174.
21. P.I. 583.
22. P.I. p. 223.
23. P.I. 206.
24. P.I. 250.
25. P.I. 241 and 242.
26. P.I. 240.
27. Z. 351.
28. P.I. p. 226.
29. O.C. 357-359.
30. P.I. 325.

31. P.I. 217.

32. O.C. 402.

33. O.C. 110.

34. P.I. 415.

35. P.I. 109.

36. P.I. 90.

37. P.I. p. 224.

38. P.I. 109, 115, 352 and 100.

39. L. Wittgenstein: A Memoir, p. 50.

40. P.I. 127.

41. P.I. 593.

42. P.I. 122.

43. P.I. 122 and 664.

44. P.I. 122.

45. P.I. 126.

46. P.I. 124.

47. P. Hacker, Insight and Illusion, p. 136.

48. P.I. 370.

49. P.I. 373.

50. P.I. 371.

51. Z. 55.

52. P.I. 372.

53. Insight and Illusion, p. 156.

54. Philosophical Grammar, ed. R. Rhees, tr. A. Kenny. (Blackwell, Oxford, 1974) 55

55. Ibid. 68

56. Z. 419.

57. P.I. 50.

58. O.C. 559.

59. P.I. 373.

60. Z. 144.

61. Z. 717.

62. Z. 146.

63. It should be noted that these 'lectures' are simply lecture notes taken by students and no claim is made that they are verbatim accounts of Wittgenstein's discussion.

64. According to Malcolm in his Memoir: "Wittgenstein was prepared by his own character and experience to comprehend the idea of a judging and redeeming God" p. 71.

65. L.R.B. p. 53.

66. L.R.B. pp. 55 and 58.

67. L.R.B. pp. 53 and 55.

68. L.R.B. p. 55.

69. Wittgenstein and Religious Belief, p. 175.

70. Ibid., p. 193.

71. Ibid., pp. 192-3.

72. Ibid., p. 193.

73. Ibid., p. 193.

74. L.R.B. pp. 53-4.

75. L.R.B. p. 54.

76. O.C. 204.

77. R. Trigg, Reason and Commitment, pp. 30 and 32.

78. L.R.B. p. 55.

79. L.R.B. p. 58.

80. L.R.B. p. 59.

81. L.R.B. p. 58.

82. L.R.B. p. 63.

83. L.R.B. p. 71.

84. L.R.B. p. 63.

85. L.R.B. p. 72.

86. L.R.B. p. 71.

87. L.R.B. p. 72.

88. L.R.B. p. 71.

89. L.R.B. p. 71.

90. L.R.B. p. 59.

91. See for a similar point: M. Durrant, 'The Use of 'Pictures' in Religious Belief', Sophia, vol. 10, 1971.

92. L.R.B. p. 56.

93. L.R.B. p. 62.

94. L.R.B. p. 61.

95. L.R.B. p. 56.

96. L.R.B. p. 54.

97. L.R.B. pp. 59-60.

98. L.R.B. p. 57.

99. L.R.B. p. 57.

100. Wittgenstein is apparently inconsistent here. Earlier we were told that evidence as such was irrelevant for the affirmation of a religious belief; now we are told that evidence is relevant but treated in a different way. Although what is meant by the evidence being treated in a different way is not stated, it apparently does not rule out the possibility of someone with 'normal' ideas of evidence in mind declaring that the evidence may be extremely flimsy.

101. L.R.B. pp. 57-8. Once again Wittgenstein is not wholly consistent. We have been told that religious believers are 'certainly not reasonable'. They are not unreasonable either - the issue is not a matter of reasonability - a kind of folly is being expressed. At the bottom of p. 58 we are informed that rather than calling the beliefs of a religious man folly one may instead say,'It is an entirely different kind of reasoning.'

102. In a Symposium, 'Science and Religion, London, 1931.

103. L.R.B. p. 59.

104. In Philosophers and Religious Truth, p. 177.

105. L.R.B. p. 59.

106. L.R.B. p. 62.

107. In Philosophers and Religious Truth,

108. Ibid., p. 181.

109. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 179.

110. Ibid., p. 181.

111. Ibid., p. 179.

112. Malcolm, Memoir, pp. 71 and 75.

113. The Listener, 28 January 1960.

114. P.I. 77.

115. L.R.B. p. 58.

116. L.R.B. p. 59.

117. D. Pears, in his book on Wittgenstein, (Collins, London, 1971) claims that Wittgenstein seems "especially reluctant to accept (what he terms) the subtle positivistic theory of religious belief." He continues: "on the one hand he frequently gravitates towards it, certainly does not reject it, and apparently has nothing else to put in its place. So what he withheld, or at least sometimes withheld, was his formal acceptance of it." p. 175 Pears, unfortunately, does not document his reasons for claiming this, but his thoughts, or rather his doubts and suspicions, are at least in line with my own suspicions and doubts.

SECTION 2 : CHAPTER 1

1. Reprinted in The Many Faced Argument, ed. by J. Hick and A. McGill, pp. 301-320. All references are to this reprint.

2. p. 79.

3. 'Ontological Argument', Philosophical Review (vol. 70, 1961) p. 65.

4. p. 304. The reference from Kant is from The Critique of Pure Reason, translated by N. K. Smith (London, 1929) p. 505.

5. St. Anselm's Proslogion, translated by M. J. Charlesworth (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1965). The claim that there are two different versions of the argument in St. Anselm's writings has been disputed. See, for example, J. M. Young, 'The Ontological Argument and the Concept of Substance', American Philosophical Quarterly (vol. 11, No. 3, 1974) pp. 181-191.

6. p. 306.

7. Ibid., pp. 308-9.

8. Ibid., p. 309.

9. Ibid., p. 308.

10. Ibid., p. 310.

11. See, for example, one excellent critique of the argument: A. Plantinga, God and other Minds, pp. 82-94.

12. p. 309.

13. Reprinted in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, ed. by A. Flew and A. MacIntyre. All references to this reprint.

14. Ibid., pp. 47-56 and pp. 71-75. One may add the critical point here in opposition to Findlay that if it makes sense to speak of 'necessary non-existence' surely it must make sense to speak of 'necessary existence'. See W. D. Hudson, A Philosophical Approach to Religion, p. 35. What this demonstrates, however, is not the correctness of predicating logically necessary existence of God, but rather if an Ontological Proof is impossible for the reasons given so is an Ontological Disproof.

15. p. 318.

16. Ibid., p. 314.

17. Ibid., p. 314.

18. Ibid., pp. 314-5.

19. Ibid., p. 315.

20. Moreover, if, as has been argued, by 'necessary being' is meant a being who is without origin, cause or ground of any kind i.e. factually or ontologically necessary rather than logically necessary, then, of course, both the Humean objection and the reply by Malcolm become redundant.

21. God and Timelessness, p. 184.

22. For a more detailed and clear account of not only this problem but of other problems associated with the claim that God's eternality must be understood as His existing timelessly. See N. Pike's instructive book, God and Timelessness, esp. Chps. 5, 6 and 7.

23. p. 318.

24. N. Malcolm, Critical notice of A. White's G. E. Moore: A Critical Exposition, Mind (vol. LXIV, Jan. 1960). The relevance of certain remarks made in this critical review

to the issue under discussion were first pointed out by R. C. Coburn in his article 'Professor Malcolm on God'. I agree in general with the particular use of these remarks made by Coburn and the significance he plots them as having for the argument as stated by Malcolm in his 'Ontological Argument' article. And I also think we would be agreed in regard to the important conclusion which the acceptance of the argument contained in the remarks would portend for Malcolm's general Ontological Argument, though we do differ in our summary account of Malcolm's revised Ontological Argument.

25. Ibid., p. 97.

26. p. 319.

27. Ibid., p. 319.

28. Ibid., p. 319.

29. Ibid., p. 320.

30. C. Lyas, 'On the Coherence of Christian Atheism', p. 17.

31. pp. 319-320.

32. Ibid., p. 319.

33. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 116.

34. p. 320.

35. Ibid., p. 320.

36. Ibid., p. 320.

37. 'Is it a Religious Belief that 'God exists'?', printed in Faith and the Philosophers, ed. J. Hick.

38. Ibid., pp. 106-7.

39. Ibid., p. 107.

40. Ibid., p. 106.

41. Ibid., p. 104.

42. Ibid., p. 106.

43. Ibid., p. 107.

44. Ibid., p. 107.

45. God and Philosophy, p. 174.

46. pp. 107-8.

47. Ibid., p. 107.

48. Philosophical Approach to Religion, p. 94.

49. p. 108.

50. Ibid., p. 108.

51. Ibid., p. 110.

52. God and the Universe of Faiths, p. 4.

53. p. 109.

54. Ibid., p. 109.

55. 'On Believing that God Exists' in Southern Journal of Philosophy (1967) p. 171.

56. p. 110.

57. Ibid., pp. 109-110.

SECTION 2 : CHAPTER 2

1. F.P.E. p. 123.

2. F.P.E. p. 126.

3. F.P.E. p. 171.

4. C.P. p. 10.

5. C.P. p. 8.

6. C.P. p. 158.

7. C.P. p. 1.

8. C.P. p. 10.

9. C.P. p. 37.

10. C.P. pp. 6-7.

11. C.P. p. 8.

12. C.P. p. 9.

13. F.P.E. p. 17.

14. F.P.E. p. 17.

15. See especially Concept of Prayer, Chapter 1.

16. Idea of a Social Science.

17. 'Understanding a Primitive Society' reprinted in Religion and Understanding, ed. D. Z. Phillips. All references are to this reprint.

18. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande, (Oxford, 1937).

19. 'Science and Sentiment', Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts, University of Egypt, 1935.

20. 'Understanding a Primitive Society', p. 11.

21. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

22. Ibid., p. 31.

23. Ibid., p. 12.

24. Ibid., p. 13.

25. Ibid., p. 28.

26. Ibid., p. 31.

27. Ibid., p. 30. He says the same of the concept of reality at p. 13.

28. Idea of a Social Science, p. 18.

29. Ibid., pp. 100-1.

30. 'Understanding a Primitive Society', p. 9.

31. Ibid., p. 35.

32. Ibid., p. 36.

33. Ibid., p. 14.

34. Idea of a Social Science, p. 101.

35. Ibid., p. 126.

36. S. Lukes, 'Some Problems about Rationality' in Rationality, ed. B. Wilson, pp. 209-210.

37. M. Hollis, 'The Limits of Irrationality' in Rationality, ed. B. Wilson, p. 218.

38. Ibid., p. 218.

39. F.P.E. p. 35.

40. F.P.E. p. 36.

41. C.P. p. 18.

42. C.P. pp. 20-21.

43. C.P. p. 21.

44. C.P. p. 13.

45. C.P. p. 17.

46. C.P. pp. 21-22. A similar argument is found in F.P.E. p. 3.

47. F.P.E. p. 17.

48. F.P.E. p. 17.

49. F.P.E. pp. 2-3.

50. F.P.E. pp. 1-2.

51. F.P.E. pp. 17-18.

52. F.P.E. p. 19.

53. C.P. p. 50.

54. Without Answers, p. 121.

55. F.P.E. p. 132, p. 85.

56. C.P. p. 25.

57. C.P. p. 14.

58. C.P. p. 25.

59. C.P. p. 20.

60. C.P. p. 19.

61. 'The Justification of Religious Belief', p. 103.

62. F.P.E. p. 70.

63. 'Truth and the 'Religious Language-game'', p. 22.

64. F.P.E. p. 70.

65. 'Wittgenstein Fideism', p. 206 and p. 208.

66. C.P. p. 32.

67. Contemporary Critiques of Religion, pp. 128-9.

68. In God and Philosophy, p. 31.

69. 'From World to God' reprinted in The Philosophy of Religion, ed. B. Mitchell, p. 170.

70. God and Philosophy, p. 32.

71. The Logical Status of 'God', p. x and p. 79.

72. Ibid., pp. x and xi.

73. A general term used to describe examinations of the issues treated by Durrant. See J. Barnes, The Ontological Argument, p. 67.

74. A. Flew, God and Philosophy, p. 36.

75. Contemporary Critiques of Religion, p. 38.

76. 'Religious Discourse and Theological Discourse', p. 158.

77. Without Answers, p. 131.

78. F.P.E. p. 4, and see also C.P. p. 25.

79. F.P.E. p. 8.

80. F.P.E. p. 5.

81. C.P. pp. 25-26, see also F.P.E. p. 4.

82. Without Answers, p. 128.

83. C.P. p. 48.

84. C.P. pp. 152-3.

85. F.P.E. p. 18,

86. C.P. p. 39.

87. F.P.E. p. 69.

88. Without Answers, p. 127.

89. 'Religious Discourse and Theological Discourse', p. 160.

90. F.P.E. p. 16.

91. F.P.E. p. 14.

92. D.I. p. 55.

93. F.P.E. p. 32.

94. F.P.E. pp. 32-33.

95. F.P.E. p. 29.

96. F.P.E. p. 29.

97. F.P.E. p. 19.

98. F.P.E. p. 30.

99. F.P.E. p. 46.

100. F.P.E. p. 32.

101. F.P.E. p. 32.

102. R. Trigg in Reason and Commitment has shown that a similar confusion or conflation takes place in p. 60 of The Concept of Prayer between 'what is meant by prayer' and 'what prayer means to someone'.

103. F.P.E. pp. 66-67.

104. The Rebel, (Peregrine Books edition) translated by A. Bower, p. 31.

105. F.P.E. p. 30.

106. F.P.E. p. 31.

107. F.P.E. p. 31: 'Is it a Religious Belief that 'God Exists'?' pp. 106-7.

108. F.P.E. p. 32.

109. However, at F.P.E. p. 12 the rebel's position is contrasted with that of the believer. He is not considered at this stage to be a believer.

110. D.I. p. 55.

111. F.P.E. pp. 31-32.

112. F.P.E. p. 68. Atheism and agnosticism are considered as religious phenomena for the rather innocuous and silly reason that "they would not exist if there were no religion".

113. F.P.E. p. 33.

114. F.P.E. p. 14.

115. In The Justification of Religious Belief, pp. 103-4.

116. In A Philosophical Approach to Religion, p. 94.

117. C.P. p. 83.

118. C.P. p. 57.

119. C.P. p. 58.

120. F.P.E. p. 56.

121. C.P. p. 109.

122. F.P.E. pp. 41-42.

123. F.P.E. p. 42.

124. F.P.E. p. 44.

125. F.P.E. p. 47.

126. F.P.E. p. 47 and p. 18.

127. N. pp. 72, 73, 74.

128. F.P.E. pp. 47-8.

129. F.P.E. p. 48.

130. F.P.E. p. 48.

131. F.P.E. p. 48.

132. Replying to Phillips in a symposium, 'From World to God', p. 159.

133. (Hafner, New York, 1948).

134. F.P.E. p. 49.

135. F.P.E. p. 50.

136. F.P.E. p. 50.

137. F.P.E. p. 50.

138. F.P.E. pp. 50-1.

139. N. p. 83 and p. 77.

140. F.P.E. pp. 51-52.

141. F.P.E. p. 53.

142. F.P.E. p. 53.

143. C.P. p. 98.

144. C.P. p. 98.

145. F.P.E. p. 54.

146. Without Answers, p. 119.

147. F.P.E. p. 56.

148. C.P. pp. 97-8.

149. F.P.E. pp. 56-7.

150. C.P. p. 98.

151. 'Religious Discourse and Theological Discourse', p. 149.

152. In Reason and Commitment, p. 34.

153. Review, Concept of Prayer, Philosophical Books, 1966.

154. Without Answers, p. 126.

155. C.P. p. 112.

156. C.P. p. 112.

157. C.P. p. 129.

158. C.P. p. 114.

159. C.P. p. 115.

160. C.P. p. 116.

161. C.P. p. 120.

162. C.P. p. 120.

163. C.P. p. 120.

164. C.P. pp. 120-1.

165. C.P. p. 121.

166. C.P. p. 122.

167. C.P. p. 130.

168. C.P. p. 122.

169. C.P. p. 122.

170. C.P. p. 122.

171. In 'Some remarks on Wittgenstein's account of Religious Belief' collected in Talk of God, Royal Institute of Phil. Lectures, Vol. 2, 1967/8, ed. G. Vesey, p. 48. Hudson also draws attention to this inconsistency in Phillips' account which I have plotted.

172. 'Is Divine Existence Credible?' reprinted in Religion and Understanding, ed. D. Z. Phillips, p. 120.

173. 'The Miraculous' reprinted in Religion and Understanding. All references are to this reprint, p. 155. (The article was originally published in American Philosophical Quarterly (Vol. II, 1965)).

174. Ibid., p. 167.

175. Ibid., p. 155.

176. Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding, ed. Selby-Bigge (Oxford, 1970) p. 115.

177. 'The Miraculous', p. 159.

178. Ibid., pp. 159-60.

179. Ibid., p. 160.

180. Ibid., p. 161.

181. Ibid., p. 162.

182. Ibid., p. 162.

183. Ibid., p. 167.

184. Ibid., p. 165.

185. Ibid., pp. 165-6.

186. Ibid., p. 166.

187. Ibid., p. 170.

188. Ibid., p. 167.

189. Ibid., p. 170.

190. 'Miracles' in Religious Studies (vol. 9, 1973) p. 318.

191. 'The Miraculous', p. 167.

192. Ibid., pp. 155-6.

193. Ibid., p. 156.

194. Ibid., p. 156.

195. Ibid., p. 157.

196. Ibid., p. 157.

197. 'Religious Discourse and Theological Discourse', p. 163.

198. Without Answers, p. 114.

199. F.P.E. p. 59.

200. F.P.E. p. 59.

201. C.P. p. 153.

202. F.P.E. p. 60.

203. In Reason and Commitment, p. 89.

204. F.P.E. p. 119.

205. D.I. p. 64.

206. F.P.E. p. 89.

207. F.P.E. p. 119.

208. F.P.E. p. 120.

209. See F.P.E. p. 116.

210. F.P.E. p. 120.

211. In Reason and Commitment, p. 90.

212. Without Answers, p. 132.

213. 'A Model for the Religious Philosophy of D. Z. Phillips'.

214. Concept of Mind (Hutchinson, London, 1949).

215. 'A Model for the Religious Philosophy of D. Z. Phillips', p. 43.

216. Ibid., p. 43.

217. Ibid., p. 43.

218. Ibid., p. 45.

219. Ibid., p. 45.

220. D.I. p. 55; F.P.E. p. 26; C.P. p. 69; F.P.E. p. 21 and p. 25.

221. 'A Model for the Religious Philosophy of D. Z. Phillips', p. 46. Professor Flew in his review of Death and Immortality in Philosophical Books (vol. 12, 1971) pp. 23-24, has this to say: "In the final chapter Phillips considers the status of these ideas of immortality and God. But he seems never, either here or earlier, to resolve the question what exactly he should claim for them. He could say that he has outlined a religion which is his own ... yet obviously Phillips would like to claim more ..." The more which Flew believes Phillips would like to claim is that his views reflect the authentic Christian tradition. But, Flew continues, Phillips does not "launch any systematic attempt to establish that the Catholic tradition has not grasped the true gospel of Jesus ..."

222. F.P.E. p. 57.

223. 'A Model for the Religious Philosophy of D. Z. Phillips', p. 47.

224. 'An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief' collected in B. Mitchell (ed.), The Philosophy of Religion, p. 89.

225. C.P. p. 68.

226. In The Varieties of Belief, pp. 42-43.

227. Ibid., p. 42.

228. 'An Empiricist's View of the Nature of Religious Belief', p. 82.

229 F.P.E. p. 29.

230. F.P.E. p. 74 and p. 212.

231. T. 6.4312.

232. F.P.E. p. 74.

233. D.I. p. 41.

234. God and the Soul, p. 29.

235. D.I. p. 41.

236. D.I. p. 43.

237. D.I. p. 44.

238. D.I. p. 45.

239. D.I. pp. 46-7.

240. D.I. p. 48.

241. D.I. p. 48.

242. D.I. pp. 48-9.

243. D.I. p. 49.

244. D.I. p. 50.

245. D.I. p. 53.

246. D.I. pp. 52-53.

247. D.I. p. 54.

248. D.I. pp. 54-55.

249. D.I. p. 55.

250. D.I. p. 49.

251. D.I. p. 60.

252. D.I. p. 61.

1. F.P.E. p. 132.

2. F.P.E. p. 166, p. 55, p. 143 from the Idea of a Social Science, p. 15.

3. 'Truth and the "Religious Language-Game"'.

4. Ibid., pp. 31-32.

5. F.P.E. p. 55.

6. K. Nielsen, Contemporary Critiques of Religion, p. 96.

7. Reason and Commitment, p. 86.

8. Ibid., pp. 14-15.

9. F.P.E. pp. 54-5.

10. F.P.E. p. 190. I think it is interesting to note that in a footnote (F.P.E. p. 61), Phillips claims that the mysticism of the Tractatus is consistent with theistic mysticism.

11. Without Answers, p. 126.

12. F.P.E., p. 97.

13. F.P.E. p. 108.

14. F.P.E. pp. 98-9.

15. F.P.E. p. 98.

16. F.P.E. p. 103.

17. F.P.E. p. 102.

18. F.P.E. p. 108.

19. F.P.E. pp. 90-91.

20. F.P.E. pp. 13-14.

21. F.P.E. p. 13.

22. F.P.E. p. 13.

23. F.P.E. pp. 87-88. Phillips does allow that certain religious beliefs may be conjectures, hypotheses, and further that there may be evidence and grounds for the belief. An example of such a religious belief which is a conjecture and is evidential is a 'belief' in the authenticity of a

'holy relic' (F.P.E. p. 87, pp. 168-9). We are not, however, enlightened as to what the criteria are by which we determine which religious beliefs are conjectural and evidential and others not.

24. Religion and Secularization, p. 39.

25. F.P.E. p. 45.

26. F.P.E. p. 108. This is very interesting. It verifies what I have suspected that Phillips is identifying a religious 'response' with a religious 'belief'. Normally one would say that one 'responds' religiously or in a religious manner because of one's religious beliefs. But if one's religious beliefs are identical with one's religious responses it cannot be the case that one responds religiously because of one's religious beliefs. Rather, one just responds.

27. F.P.E. p. 90.

28. F.P.E. p. 114.

29. The Philosophy of Religion, ed. by Mitchell, p. 8.

30. Concluding Unscientific Postscript, p. 182.

31. F.P.E. p. 166.

32. F.P.E. p. 90.

33. D.I. p. 67.

34. D.I. p. 64.

35. D.I. p. 72.

36. D.I. p. 74.

37. D.I. pp. 77-78.

38. F.P.E. p. 160.

39. F.P.E. p. 117.

40. F.P.E. p. 72.

41. F.P.E. p. 81.

42. F.P.E. pp. 127-128.

43. F.P.E. pp. 81-82. For Wittgenstein in the Tractatus religious attitudes were not determined by the facts, because what is a fact, what particular factual situation is realised, is a contingent matter, it could have been otherwise. 'If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and

is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental.' (T. 6.41) For Phillips, however, it is not this notion of contingency which is stressed, but rather the notion that to have a regard for the facts is to 'seek compensation'. It is to subordinate religious responses to a further end. It is to assess the responses as a means to this further end. What is all important is the end. For Holland this is 'the greedy nephew's conception of God'. (p. 151)

44. F.P.E. p. 81.

45. F.P.E. p. 129.

46. C.P. p. 67.

SECTION 2 : CHAPTER 4

1. Simone Weil, The Need for Roots, translated by A. F. Wills (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952) pp. 87-88: quoted by Phillips, F.P.E. pp. 162-3.

2. C.P. p. 27.

3. 'Is the Justification of Religious Belief a Possible Enterprise', pp. 454-5.

4. C.P. pp. 149-150.

5. 'Is the Justification of Religious Belief a Possible Enterprise', p. 453.

6. 'Truth and the "Religious Language-Game"', p. 28.

7. F.P.E. pp. 153 and 155.

8. Reason and Commitment, pp. 90-91.

9. See F.P.E. p. 155.

10. F.P.E. p. 158.

11. D.I. p. 61.

12. D.I. p. 71.

13. F.P.E. p. 158.

14. F.P.E. p. 158.

15. F.P.E. pp. 158-159.

16. D.I. p. 71.

17. In 'Truth and the "Religious Language-Game"', p. 31.

18. D.I. pp. 65-66.

19. In Wittgenstein and Religious Belief, p. 184.

20. F.P.E. p. 246.

21. F.P.E. p. 246; Letter to a Priest,(Routledge, 1953) pp. 10-11.

22. In Contemporary Critiques of Religion, p. 17.

SECTION 2 : CHAPTER 5

1. F.P.E. p. 132.

2. F.P.E. p. 7.

3. C.P. p. 27 and p. 10.

4. C.P. p. 10 and p. 27.

5. F.P.E. p. 66.

6. F.P.E. p. 127.

7. C.P. p. 10.

8. C.P. p. 12.

9. C.P. pp. 4-5.

10. C.P. p. 5.

11. Phillips has particularly in mind Professor Hepburn's Christianity and Paradox (C. A. Watts, London, 1958) and Professor Flew's article 'Theology and Falsification' in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, ed. Flew and MacIntyre.

12. C.P. p. 8.

13. C.P. p. 11.

14. F.P.E. p. 21.

15. F.P.E. p. 9.

16. C.P. p. 43.

17. C.P. p. 51.

18. F.P.E. p. 67.

19. F.P.E. p. 68 (my underlining).

20. D.I. p. 74.

21. D.I. p. 74.

22. N. K. Smith, 'Is Divine Existence Credible?' in Religion and Understanding, ed. Phillips, pp. 105-106.

23. D.I. p. 75.

24. F.P.E. p. 16.

25. F.P.E. p. 67.

26. F.P.E. p. 67.

27. F.P.E. p. 33.

28. F.P.E. p. 221.

29. See C.P. pp. 78-80, F.P.E. p. 208.

30. D.I. p. 70.

31. See K. Nielsen, Contemporary Critiques of Religion, pp. 9-10.

32. F.P.E. p. 265.

33. F.P.E. pp. 265-6.

34. F.P.E. p. 267.

35. F.P.E. pp. 267-8.

36. F.P.E. p. 268.

37. Contemporary Critiques of Religion, p. 10.

38. C.P. p. 158.

39. C.P. p. 158.

40. In The Varieties of Belief, pp. 48-49.

41. In The Philosophy of Religion, ed. B. Mitchell, p. 6.

SECTION 3

1. C.P. p. 50.

2. 'Tertullian's Paradox' in New Essays in Philosophical Theology, ed. Flew and MacIntyre, p. 194.

3. Ibid., p. 194.

4. F.P.E. p. 71.

5. F.P.E. p. 115.

6. F.P.E. p. 75 and p. 130.

7. F.P.E. p. 120.

8. F.P.E. p. 77.

9. F.P.E. p. 133 and p. 155.

10. C.P. p. 148.

11. F.P.E. p. 14, p. 115 and p. 46.

12. F.P.E. p. 58.

13. F.P.E. p. 230.

14. F.P.E. p. 93.

15. In 'Is it a Religious Belief that 'God Exists'?', in Faith and the Philosophers, p. 107.

16. In 'Is Religion a 'Form of Life'', p. 163.

17. Ibid., p. 164.

18. Ibid., p. 163.

19. In 'Truth and the "Religious Language-Game"', p. 20.

20. Remarks on the Foundation of Mathematics, V. 15; B.B. p. 81.

21. See C. Cherry, 'Games and Language', Mind (vol. LXXXIV, Oct. 1975) p. 531.

22. In 'Wittgenstein's Builders' in Discussions of Wittgenstein, p. 73.

23. F.P.E. p. 95.

24. F.P.E. pp. 96-97.

25. F.P.E. p. 97.

26. F.P.E. p. 97.

27. F.P.E. p. 101.

28. See M. Charlesworth's Philosophy of Religion: The Historic

Approaches, p. 168. Charlesworth first pointed out this distinction (though not with Phillips in mind) but I think the points we wish to make are different.

29. Ibid., p. 173.

30. F. B. Dilley, 'The Status of Religious Belief', p. 47.

31. G. Downing, 'Games, Families, the Public, and Religion', pp. 38-54. Downing is one of the very few philosophers who seems to want to stress the importance of the second model in elucidating the nature of religious beliefs and concepts. He, however, seems to think his views reflect Wittgenstein's views on religion. This I doubt. However, his treatment of the whole topic is very interesting.

32. Ibid., p. 40.

33. In 'The Varieties of Religious Experience (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1903) p. 26.